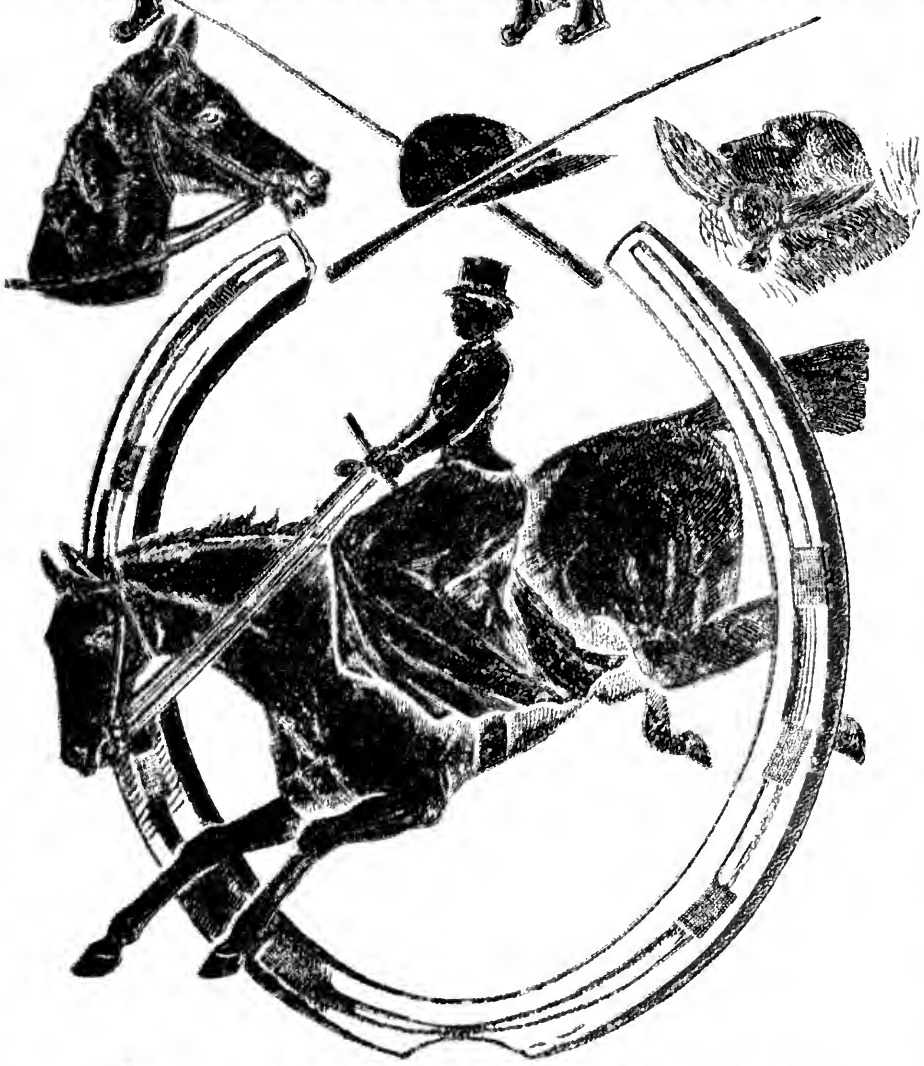
SPORTING RECOLLECTIONS

BY FINCH MASON



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SPORTING RECOLLECTIONS.

Sporting Recollections

HUNTING, SHOOTING, CRICKET STEEPLECHASING, RACING

ETC., ETC.

BY FINCH MASON

TWENTY-FOUR HIGHLY-FINISHED TINTED FULL-PAGE SKETCHES, AND SEVENTY-EIGHT TEXT ILLUSTRATIONS, BY THE AUTHOR

FIFTH EDITION

LONDON
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1886

DEDICATED

TO

SIR GEORGE WOMBWELL, BART.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

THE success achieved by his previous efforts at the delineation of subjects taken from the world of Sport, both with pen and pencil, induces the Author to hope that his present attempt will be received by Sportsmen generally with equal favour.

Some of the stories herein have appeared at various times in the pages of the following Journals:—*Bell's Life in London*, the *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*, *Land and Water*, and *Life*, to whose respective Proprietors the Author begs to express his thanks for their kind permission to republish them in collected form.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
OLD DAYS AT AINTREE	1
'BOWLED OUT.' *By* A. HUMBUG, ESQ.	9
'DICK DOWNEYBIRD'S DODGE'	21
DOLLY DUMPLETON'S HARRIERS	33
MAD AS A MARCH HARE	61
'MY AUNT'S CAT'	71
THE SCOTCH KEEPER: A RECOLLECTION OF THE GRAND NATIONAL STEEPLECHASE	83
JOHN JELLYBY'S WOOD	89
A QUIET MORNING WITH PROFESSOR MAULEY	99
A RIDE ON THE WRONG HORSE	107
AN EXPENSIVE DAY'S SPORT	117
BRICKET WOOD: A RECOLLECTION	127
JACK TALBOT'S CHRISTMAS-BOX	135
THE NEW NEIGHBOUR: A TALE OF THE TURF	145
'A TERRIBLE ACCIDENT'	161
THE HUNT BREAKFAST AT MR. AND MRS. PETER PIPER'S	173
A MIDNIGHT ADVENTURE	191

List of Full-page Tinted Illustrations.

	PAGE
FLOWERS PLUCKED AT AINTREE	1
CAPTAIN COVENTRY COMES WITH A RUSH	3
'TWO'S COMPANY, THREE'S NONE!'	5
'HOORAY FOR THE PEOPLE'S WILLIAM!'	27
THE FAVOURITE FOR THE COUNTY CUP	28
TOMMY TAILBY OUT FOR A LARK	50
FARMER BUCKWHEAT COMES TO GRIEF	56
'BY THE LIVING JINGO, IT'S MY AUNT'S CAT!'	78
DISTURBANCE WINS	87
'CUSS THE THING! I NEVER CAN SHOOT AFTER LUNCH'	96
'ONE FOR HIS NOB AND TWO FOR HIS HEELS'	104
THE KING OF THE VALE	112
'THAT BRUTE BAREBONES!'	114
'MASTER WOULDN'T A TOOK TWO 'UNDERD GUINEAS FOR THAT THERE 'ORSE!'	122
AN OLD BERKELEY DAY AT BRICKET	129
THE SQUIRE'S BEST HACK	138
'SHALL NEVER SEE 'EM AGAIN TO-DAY'	142
MR. BAGGS HOLLOAS FOR ASSISTANCE	150
NEWMARKET NOTIONS	155
THE YOUNG SQUIRE	170
MR. PETER PIPER WAYLAYS THE DOOK	177
THE HOUNDS ARE THROWN *IN*, MR. PIPER IS THROWN *OFF*	183
'ANYTHING OF IMPORTANCE T'OTHER SIDE, OLD CHAPPIE?'	184
IN FOR A STINGER	186

LIST OF WOODCUTS.

	PAGE
On the Road to Aintree	1
Mr. Thomas	4
Captain Machell	6
Mr. Coventry	7
The Nobler King	8
An Easy Catch	9
Major Wiggleton	14
One in the Bread-Basket	16
Well Caught!	17
Stumped!	19
Mr. Richard Downeybird	21
Keeping the Course	27
Captain Dandybrush, late of the Roans	29
The People's William	30
A Matinée Musicale	31
An Early Morning Sketch at Eton	33
Mr. Robert Davies, M.F.H.	39
Robert orders Breakfast	44
Robert meets the Cotswold	46
Forrard!	48
Farmer Buckwheat preparing for Market	51
Farmer Buckwheat misses the Fox	54
Colonel Meddler	55
'Blow your Horn, Dolly!'	56
Pounded	60

PAGE

A New Invention 61

The Escape from the Madhouse 69

Master Tilbury Topper 71

'Curse the Cat!' 72

My Aunt 74

My Aunt's Cat on the Prowl 76

The Reading of the Will 81

Peasant *v.* Pheasant 82

The Favourite 83

A Sketch Outside the Adelphi Hotel 85

A nice Day for Steeplechasing 87

Mr. James Jessamy 89

The Beaters 95

Mark! Woodcock!! 97

Professor Mauley 99

A Turn at the Dumb-bells 102

A Street Fight 105

Which is the Way?' 107

A Run with the Baron 115

Over the Grass 116

Partridge Shooting 117

Master's Young Horse 122

'Go it, Ponto!' 126

En route to Bricket 127

'Where's your Ticket?' 128

Ralph Smith 129

The Master of the O. B. H. 130

Captain Ramsay 131

Mr. Wilson 132

The Master of Kytes 133

'Come up, you Brute!' 134

In and Out Clever 135

List of Woodcuts.

PAGE

TEMPUS ADIRE DOMUM 139

CISSY LEGH 141

AN UNEXPECTED CHRISTMAS-BOX 144

THE 'GREAT' BAGGS 145

MR. BAGGS IS FOUND OUT 158

A HEAVY BETTOR 159

THE NEW GUN 161

THE MAN WITH THE LUNCH 164

THE BROOK 170

'WOH!' 171

MR. JUMPING-POWDER 173

HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF SYLLABUB. AFTER SMUDGE, R.A. 176

MISS PETER PIPER WRITING FOR THE BAG FOX . . . 178

GOING TO THE MEET 179

THE DOOK RETURNS THANKS 181

AFTER THE HUNT BREAKFAST 182

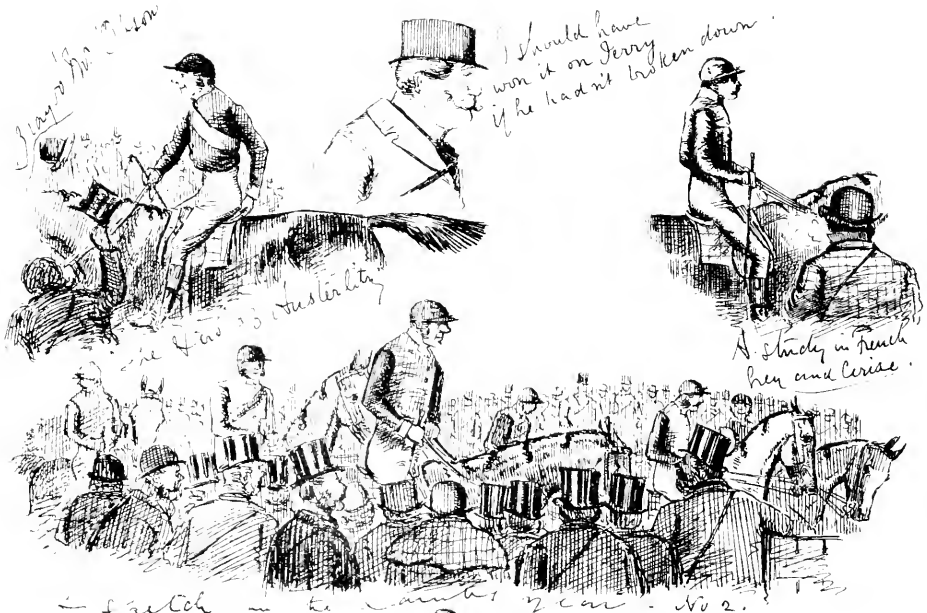
'OVER THE HILLS AND FAR AWAY' 183

THE REV. DULLMUG HAS A BILIOUS ATTACK 188

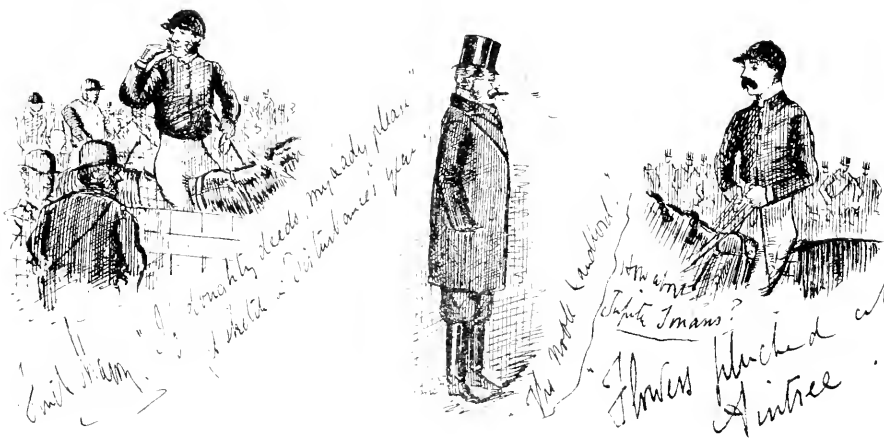
MR. PETER PIPER 189

THE POACHER 191

CAUGHT AT LAST 200



Capt: Becher, in mask. Mr Coventry shows the way.



see page 1.

SPORTING RECOLLECTIONS.

OLD DAYS AT AINTREE.

ON THE ROAD TO AINTREE.

WHEN I was a happy boy at Eton (and, for all Mr. James Payn may say to the contrary, I believe, and firmly too, that a boy *can* be very happy at school) the pictures that adorned the walls of the rooms, of certainly nine out of ten of my gay schoolfellows, were decidedly of a sporting tendency. Whether this is so now I don't pretend to say. The young gents of the present time are getting so very advanced in their ideas, that it would not surprise me in the least to hear that choice impressions after, say, Rossetti, or Mr. Ten-o'Clock Whistler, now occupied the places on the walls, where, in former days, nothing but examples of Landseer, Herring and Alken, would have been to be seen. Comparisons are always odious, so I won't make any. I should probably be told if I did, too, that the boys of the present day are much more refined in their ideas, and have better taste in every way, than their predecessors. Leaving the present and referring to the past, then. As I have just mentioned, in my time nearly every boy in the school was wont to adorn his room with prints of a sporting nature, certainly all my own friends did. One of them, in particular, I remember, was the proud possessor of that well-known print, after Herring, of 'Steeplechase Cracks.' Where is the sportsman who does not know it? Jem Mason on Lottery, riding at a big wall, which Lord Strathmore,

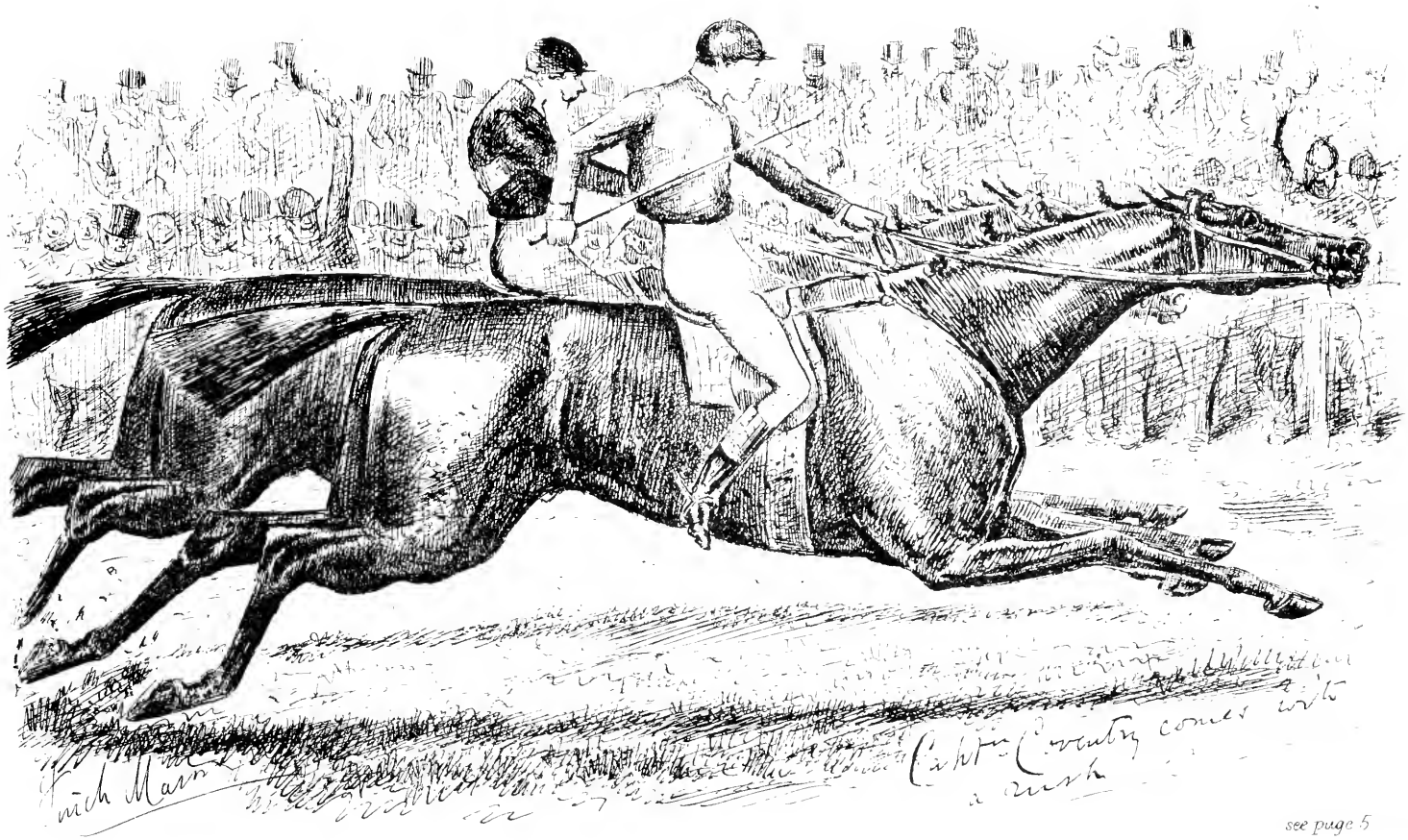
Allan M'Donough, Captain Peel, and a lot more, are already jumping, in pursuit of Captain Powell, Tom Oliver, and Captain Broadley, who are 'showing the way.' This particular print was a source of great delight to me, and many a time and oft used I to gaze on it in company with its sporting proprietor with intense satisfaction to myself, and wonder how long it would be before I should see the 'real thing.' In the holidays, too, my youthful ardour would be further excited by being pointed out, by some ancient sportsman whilst out hunting, some of the line of country ridden over by Captain Becher, The Squire, Dan Seffert & Co., in the palmy days of the St. Albans Steeplechases, when the renowned Tommy Coleman ruled the roast, in that now most dead-alive of towns.

A run over to the Steeplechases at Old Windsor, in company with some other fourth-form sportsmen during the Easter half, and the sight of Ben Land performing over a country, to say nothing of the exhilarating spectacle of Captain Bulkeley starting the riders, made me still more enthusiastic.

Bell's Life was taken in from that moment and devoured from end to end (I was all but 'put in the bill' one day for mixing up 'Bos Tyler' with 'Wat' of that ilk when 'called up' in English history). 'Orange Blossom' I thought was an out-and-out better poet than Horace any day in the week, and as for Cæsar's *Commentaries*, why they weren't in the hunt with Dick Christian's lectures.

Instead of knowing the streets of Rome and Troy, and supping 'with Fates and Furies,' I spent (thanks to *The Druid*) all my imaginary time, now with Sir Tatton Sykes, anon with John Scott; then again with the Hon. Grantley Berkeley, or perhaps Bill Bean, the arch-trespasser of England, whom I always shall look upon, next to Mr. Alfred Jingle, as the most delightfully impudent person I ever read of.

Crammed then as I was, to the muzzle, with sporting lore of every possible description, the gentle reader may well imagine that when, soon after my school days had come to an end, I found myself one cold afternoon in March, 1865, standing on the bleak plains of Aintree, about to look on at the start for the Grand National Steeplechase, I felt for the time being in the seventh heaven of delight. It was a bitterly cold day, and, if I remember rightly, there was a fall of snow whilst the race was being run. It was

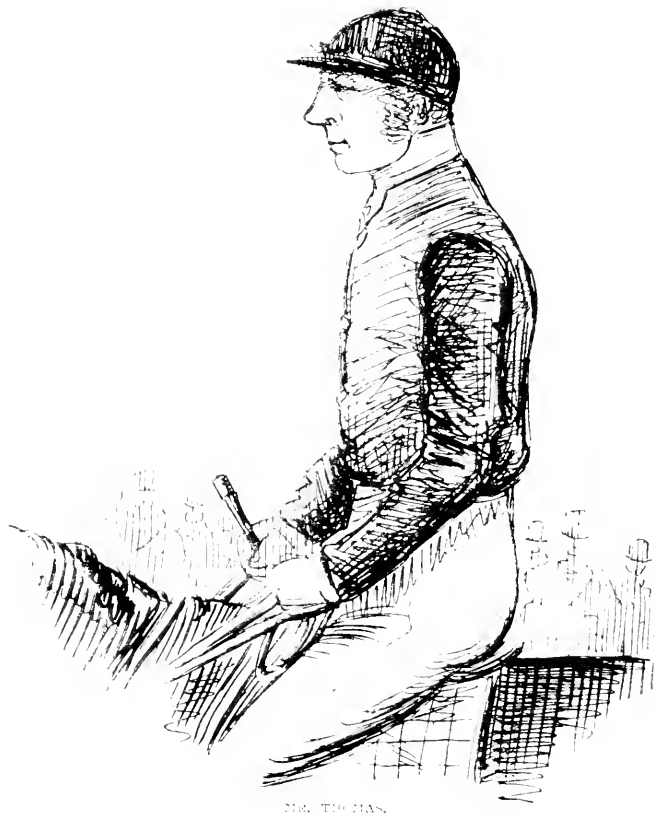


see page 5

on that well-remembered day that I first set eyes on those celebrities of the steeplechase field, Mr. Thomas, mounted appropriately enough on Thomastown, George Stevens in the brown jacket and blue cap of Lord Coventry, on, I think, Emblematic, the previous year's winner—or was it his better-looking sister, Emblem? they both ran, I think—George Holman on the celebrated L'Africaine, Captain Tempest on Hall Court, and last, but not least, Captain Coventry on the chestnut Alcibiade. Got up to perfection as the Guardsman was, and looking from head to foot indeed the very *beau idéal* of a gentleman jockey, it was not to be wondered at that, having feasted my eyes on horse and rider as they moved leisurely down past the stand, I came to the conclusion that with what Mr. Benjamin Buckram would call 'sich a consternation of talent on his back' as Captain H. Coventry, it would be a remarkably odd thing if Alcibiade did not go precious near winning. Having no idea of weight in those days, I had, I remember, invested a trifle already on the heavily handicapped L'Africaine, or 'Lar Hafrican,' as the ring called him; however, this it is, so strong was my second fancy that I could not resist rushing off, without a moment's loss of time, to have a shy at 'Cherry Angell's' chestnut.

When the notorious 'Mad Windham' was up before the Lunacy Commissioners, for those learned gentry to settle amongst themselves whether he could fairly lay claim to his sobriquet or *vice versâ*, it came out in evidence that once, when travelling abroad, and being taken to see some celebrated cathedral or church, I forget which, he was asked what he thought of it. 'I think,' said he, 'it's a d——d fine thing!' Now this may not have been a very suitable remark to have made with reference to a sacred edifice of any kind; but I certainly think, that had anybody asked me what I thought of the sight, when I, for the first time in my life, saw the large field of horses taking part in the great Liverpool Steeplechase come flying over the large water-jump in front of the stand, not one of them making a single mistake, I should have been strongly inclined to have used the very same words, as the most expressive I could have found for the purpose, on the spur of the moment. Yes! it is a fine sight, a very fine sight, 'which nobody can deny,' as the song says. Watch the jockeys as they steady their horses!

'*Tchk*,' goes Mr. Thomas—I *know* he does, for I've got the glasses up and can see his lips move—he is right in front, leaning forward in the saddle, until just before taking off, when he sits well down, back go his shoulders, and over they go,



MR. THOMAS.

with any amount to spare, and before you can say 'Knife' are round the bend by the stables and out of sight. Over go the rest, all in a cluster—well jumped, by the Lord Harry! And now, what's this one all by himself? Over he goes, too, but, unlike the others, with none too much to spare; for he's beat, and bang out of the hunt. It is L'Africaine, the celebrated French horse. 'Too much weight!' 'I told you so!' say the wise ones.

Nothing more can now be seen, except by those on the top of the stand, until the horses jump on to the racecourse for the final run in. A roar from those thus elevated announces the defeat of Joe Maly, the favourite; and then, soon after, comes

see page 5

another roar, denoting that they have cleared the canal fence, and are coming to the first flight of hurdles. 'Why, it's Hall Court!' 'No, it ain't!' bawls another; 'it's Halcyby Hades, I tell yer! *Now* we can see 'em!' What a race! Captain Tempest seems to have it well in hand; but no! he's beat—more so, indeed, than his horse—whilst his brother-soldier is as strong as when he began, and finishes with all the resolution of a lion. The two pass the judge's box amidst a whirlwind of cheering.

For a moment the chestnut's backers are in doubt, but they are soon reassured. See! up go the numbers! and a mighty cheering from all sides announces the fact that Captain Coventry, by dint of as fine a piece of horsemanship as was probably ever witnessed, has just succeeded in landing Cherry Angell's bright-coloured jacket first for that much-coveted prize, the Grand National Steeplechase. I have been to a few Grand Nationals since; I saw Salamander, the next year, win by any number of lengths—Hall Court, oddly enough, being second again, but with nobody on his back this time. He got rid of his jockey soon after starting, jumped the whole of the country with the other horses, and, as I say, finished second.

His old jockey, Captain Tempest, this time was not 'up,' but rode Merrimac, if I recollect right. I think, too, it was in Salamander's year that I saw what struck me as an extra fine bit of horsemanship on the part of one of the jockeys; which one, though, I can't say. When the horses were viewed coming up to the water-jump opposite the stand, something was seen to be some lengths in front, and on each side of him a loose horse. On they came, neck and neck. The jockey in the centre never lost his 'stupidity' for a moment. Just as they neared the jump he gave his right-hand neighbour a cut with his whip that made him keep his distance; like a flash of lightning, changed his whip into his left hand, and did the like to the other loose 'un, and over the three went abreast, and with no cannon, thanks to the jockey's presence of mind. Mr. Alec Goodman, the rider of Salamander, as he cantered leisurely in, looked anything but pleased I remember, and with reason; for I was told after the race, that not only had he never been on the horse's back before, but had not the slightest idea how good he was, and consequently had a very insignificant sum on

his mount compared to what he would have had had he known the real state of the poll.

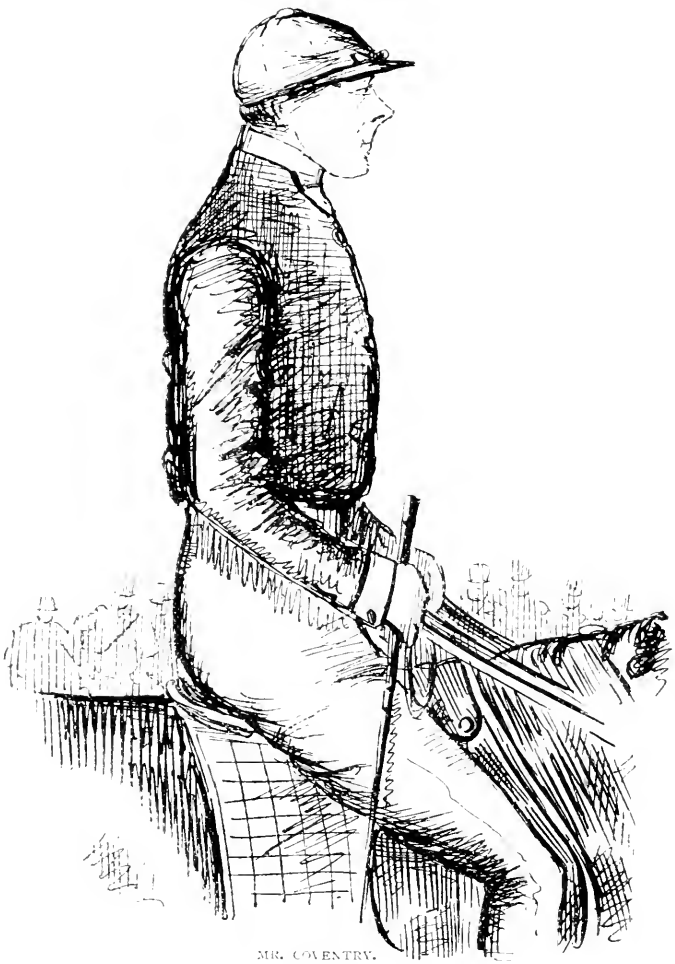
The owner, on the other hand, won more money on him than has ever been landed on a steeplechase before or since.

I saw the Lamb win for the second time, with Mr. Thomas on his back; and a pretty sight it was, there being a lot of them in it at the finish, though the Lamb won very cleverly at last. The day, too, was perfection—quite like summer, in fact. And what a neat little gentleman the Lamb was! I dare say my judgment may be voted wrong by a good many, but I shall always consider

CAPTAIN MACHELL.

the Lamb to be the best-looking cross-country horse I ever saw; and next to him the Colonel—though, of course, the two were of quite a different stamp. The Colonel, I remember, in that same year, was cheered by the mob as he went down the course with old George Stevens on his back. The poor little Lamb! his end was a sad one. Sold to the Germans, he ran in some steeplechase in Vaterland, with the ground as hard as iron, fell, broke his leg, and was kept for hours in agony whilst the phlegmatic Teuton who saw after him telegraphed to his master for permission to put him out of his misery. Disturbance's

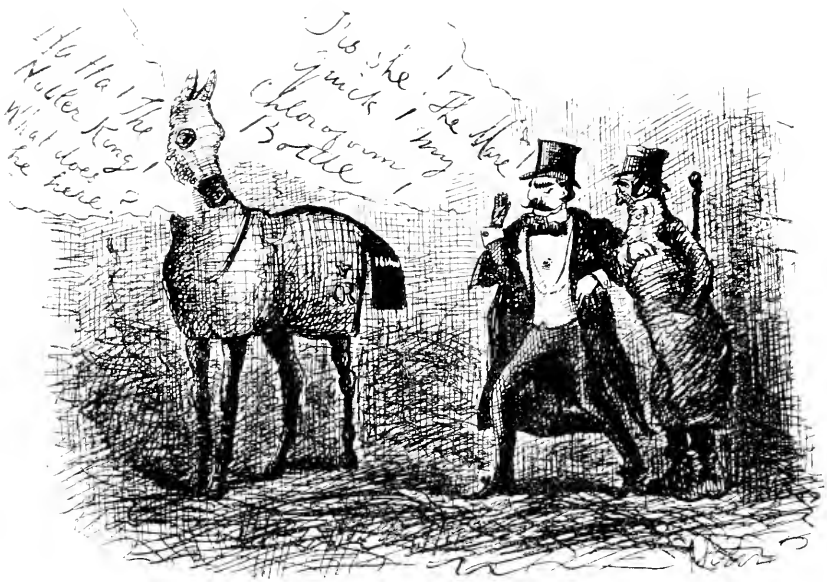
win, too, in 1873, was a sensational one. There again was a gentleman rider—a real gentleman rider, and probably the finest we have seen of late years—victorious; and there again, according to general opinion, the second *ought* to have won, but was but indifferently ridden. The last time I visited Aintree was in 1876, when Regal won, after a tremendous



MR. COVENTRY.

finish with old Congress. I had gone there with a friend on purpose to see Chandos win. Said Mr. John Corlett, in the columns of the Pink'un that year, '*Do* you want to get back all your losses of the past year?—Back Chandos for the Grand National. *Do* you want to make a rattling good start for *this*

year?—Back Chandos.' I did, and when I saw him flounder on to his nose as he landed over the water-jump, and Jewitt most cleverly recover him, and noticed the way he quickly rejoined his horses, cantering apparently at his ease whilst they were galloping, it was no wonder that, turning round to my companion, I told him that I thought our money was as good as in our pockets. When, then, we saw Captain Machell's colours coming over the last hurdle, only, unfortunately, on a black instead of a chestnut; why our two countenances very naturally began to look as blue as the colour of the winner's cap. This was my last Grand National, and though there are pleasant reminiscences in connexion with all those I have seen, Alcibiades' day still takes the cake in point of interest—with me, at all events.



THE NOLLER KING

'BOWLED OUT.'

By A. HUMBUG, Esq.

AN EASY CATCH.

IT is astonishing how easy it is for a man, if he is only clever enough not to expose his ignorance in the field of action, to pass muster amongst his friends and the world in general as a Sportsman. That is the one great point, never be found out. For years past, I, Adolphus Humbug (well named, you'll say, dear reader), have lived blissfully on, happy in the knowledge that I am regarded and looked up to by all my friends and acquaintances as a Nimrod of the first water—an all-round sportsman, I believe they call me. Once I actually saw myself described in print—*Bell's Life* it was, if I recollect right—as a *fine* sportsman. That was on the one occasion when I disported myself as a pigeon-shooter at the Gun Club. I went in for a big handicap—was, I believe, backed heavily by my friends, who of course went on my reputation, and I repaid their confidence in me by missing every bird—every blessed bird, I give you my honour—as clean as a whistle. I attributed my bad shooting to 'Stomach;' an excuse that went down remarkably well, as I had given, as luck would have it, a big dinner at Greenwich the night before, and my backers at Shepherd's Bush having been my guests on that festive occasion of course could not say much. It was that 'Saumon à la Norvége' did it, I told 'em. A man must shun all rich things if he means to shoot straight, I went on; so that in reality, so far from doing my fair fame any damage, I did

it good, for hang me if they did not in the future quote me as an authority on 'diet' as well as sport! Lord, how I laughed when, as I have just said, I cast my eye over *Bell's Life* the following Sunday morning, and read, 'That "fine" sportsman, Mr. Humbug, was evidently out of all form, for he failed to grass his birds in his usual style, and was consequently early out of the competition.' Dear old 'Nunquam Dormio!' you'll be the death of me if you go on like that, thought I, as I threw down the paper and roared with laughter. Well, as I have said, for years have I gone on like this, my fame as a mighty hunter increasing every day. Do my friends want to buy hunters for themselves? Their dear friend Humbug must be asked to have a look at him first, though the said Humbug don't know a horse from a cow (this, of course, is in strict confidence). 'Will you, dear old chappie,' writes one, 'come to lunch to-morrow at the club? I want you to go with me after to Stephen Grant's and help me to order some guns and rifles for India.' 'I want you, old fellow,' writes another, 'to come to Dace's with me this afternoon, to choose some salmon flies for Norway.' 'I am just getting a lot of nags together,' says another. 'Where would you advise me to go and hunt this season if you were me? Blackmore Vale, Bicester, Market Harboro', where shall it be? Give us the benefit of your experience, there's a good old man.'

'Hang the fellows!' I used to exclaim as I read their letters, 'they seem to think I'm Colonel Hawker, Professor Gamgee, and Stonehenge, rolled into one! I wish to goodness they'd go to some one else for advice.'

Well, well, pride will have a fall occasionally, and the sad experience I am about to relate will, I trust, act as a beneficial warning to my brother-charlatans, that if they want to keep up their unmerited characters they must never give people a chance of finding them out. Brag, sneer, shake your head, give your opinion, even dress the part, as much as you like, but never, on any account, be rash enough to endanger your precious reputation, or, I may add, your personal safety, by risking an *exposé* in the open field. If you do, you will be done. Look at Mr. Winkle, for instance; so long as he only dressed and talked the part he was all right, but he must needs go and accept old Wardle's invitation to shoot partridges, and to be rash enough to allow the young lady with the black eyes and the fur round the top of her

boots to inveigle him into putting on a pair of skates. Poor Mr. Winkle! It brings tears into my eyes, I declare, when I read how he failed ignominiously in both attempts, was abused roundly by the indignant Mr. Pickwick, and found his fame as a sportsman gone for ever. The equally celebrated Mr. Alfred Jingle, how much wiser now was he in his generation! He, when he made his historic descent on the cricket-match at Dingley Dell, contented himself with playing the part of critic, abusing here, applauding there, to his heart's content, thereby earning fame as a great cricketer, without the least inconvenience to himself. He simply related his great single-wicket match with Colonel Blazo and Quanko Sambo, and that was amply sufficient for the credulous Dingley Dellers. No, no, Alfred Jingle, Esq., of No Hall, Nowhere, was far too clever to risk his reputation by offering to join in the game himself.

Now if there is one particular sport that I am more ignorant of, but am supposed by my silly friends to know about, and the intricacies of, more than another, it is the manly game of cricket. Because I am a member of the Marylebone Club, and because during the London season it is my pleasure to spend the best part of the day, when there is a big match on at Lord's ground, comfortably seated in the Pavilion, whilst I smoke my cigar in comfort, and look on at the game with a patronising air; because, I say, I have a fancy, being partial to fresh air and genial society, for thus spending my days during the summer months, Messrs. Tom, Dick, and Harry must immediately set me down as a great authority on the game itself. I can't help it. It's not my fault, I declare. Because I shout, 'Ah! butter-fingers!' when a fielder-out fails in an easy catch, or applaud vociferously, though I am probably looking another way, when one of the batsmen is cleverly stumped by the adroit wicket-keeper, I am looked upon as a great cricketer. Old Muddleby, for instance, will come up to me wheezing and puffing. 'Now tell me,' says he, 'tell me, Humbug, what now is your candid opinion concerning the great long-stop question F. G. is making such a stir about in all the sporting papers? Now, is he right? (puff) or is he wrong?' (puff.) 'Most certainly he is right,' I answer, assertively. 'I don't say so, mind, because F. G. is a personal friend of mine [I don't know him from Adam], but simply that, having considered the matter carefully over, given it a deal of attention indeed [Heaven help

me! I don't even know what it is the man's talking about], I can come to no other conclusion than that F. G. is right—as, indeed, he invariably is—in every one of his arguments.' 'Oh, indeed!' puffs Muddleby. 'You think so too, do you? Well, I'm very glad to hear you say so, for I am of the same opinion; and now *you* say so I feel positive about it.' And poor Muddleby puffs off, to bore some one else on the same subject. Being then—or rather, I should say, *thought* to be—such a great authority on cricket, it was hard that, after so many years' experience, I should now for once have so forgotten my usual caution as to be drawn by the wiles of one of the other sex, a mere chit of a girl, scarcely out of the schoolroom, into making an exhibition of myself—literally an exhibition—in the cricket-field, thereby losing for ever my long-established prestige as a player at, and judge of, the noble game. Noble, indeed! Bah! how I hate the very name of it!

This is how it happened. Sitting as usual, one jolly hot day, in my favourite place in the Pavilion, smoking a cheerful cigar and looking on at Gentlemen *v.* Players, and thinking to myself how much more comfortable it was to be sitting there in the cool than to be cutting about all over the ground in pursuit of a nasty cricket-ball on such a blazing day, as the eleven unhappy gentlemen who were 'fielding out' were then doing, who should come up but my friend Tozer.

'The very man I was looking for!' said he, as he sat down beside me. 'I want, old fellow, to introduce you to some people here—a charming family, my dear Humbug, and perfectly devoted to cricket. They are up in town for the season, and they come here nearly every day. The fact is, that they are a cricketing family; they seem, indeed, to think of nothing else, and they are much in want of some one like yourself to point out all the great guns to them, and discuss the points of the game with, and I am not man enough for the post. So come, old fellow,' said Tozer, grasping my arm, 'come and be introduced to the Lilyfields at once. They are in a carriage close by, with lots of lunch. I'm sure you'll like 'em. Old Lilyfield is one of the jolliest old country squires you ever came across, and his girls are charming. As for one, the youngest one, Thomasina—Tommy, as they call her—she is . . . .' Here Tozer turned up his eyes and smacked his lips with intense gusto—'Well, I can't do her justice; come and judge for yourself.'

Seeing that Tozer would take no denial, I reluctantly abandoned my seat, and arm-in-arm we proceeded in search of the Lilyfield equipage. We found it without much difficulty, and I was formally introduced by Tozer as 'a great cricketer, and one of my oldest friends,' as I heard him say in an audible whisper to the eldest daughter, to whom I discovered shortly after that Tozer was engaged. Sly Tozer! Well, I found the family quite up to my friend's description of them. Lilyfield *père* a jolly old gentleman as ever stepped; Miss Lilyfield (there was no Mrs. Lilyfield), sedate, though happy, as became an engaged damsel; Miss Ada Lilyfield, the second daughter, rather plain, but lively as a kitten; and, lastly, Tommy Lilyfield, the beauty of the family. How can I describe her? I can't; I give it up. Like Tozer, I can only sigh and smack my lips when I think of her. Suffice it to say that I, Adolphus Humbug, with a heart steeled, as I thought, against all the darts that tricky young gentleman, Cupid, might choose to shoot at me, lost it now in one snap-shot, as I may say. The first glance from those liquid blue eyes, peeping from under the charming little French bonnet of Miss Tommy Lilyfield, did for me effectually. In ten minutes I was 'hail-fellow-well-met' with the whole family. One short, delightful month passed, every day of which was spent more or less in their company. Ascot, Sandown, Lord's, Hurlingham, dinners at Richmond, ditto at Greenwich, parties to the theatre —nothing could be done without dear Mr. Humbug: and the second day of the Eton and Harrow match found me formally engaged to the fair Miss Tommy, and bound down to accompany the family when they took leave of town the following week, and returned to their country home in Buttercupshire.

* * * * * * *

'It's all settled, my dears,' said old Mr. Lilyfield, addressing his daughters on the second morning after my arrival, as we sat at breakfast. 'I've just received a letter from Wiggleton, saying he has got his team together, and inquiring if next Thursday will suit us for our annual tussle. Wiggleton, my dear Humbug,' said the old gentleman, turning to me, 'is my neighbour at Poppleton Park, and every year he collects an eleven together in opposition to one got up by me, and we have a grand cricket-match, one year at his place, the next at mine. This year it is our turn. They have beaten us now three years running, but I

think,' said the Squire, rubbing his hands with every outward sign of satisfaction, 'I think, with the aid of a certain great person, whose services I can count upon for our side' (here the good old gentleman looked slyly at me), 'we shall give my friend the Major and his merry men such a day's leather-hunting as they little expect. What fun it will be to watch you sending the Major's swifts and Tom Slogger's slow twisters over the high elms at the side of the ground! What a joke it will be to see their wickets go down one after another, for scarcely any runs! for with *you* to bowl—we shall put you on, of course—I don't see what else can happen. Yes, yes—poor Wiggleton! he little

MAJOR WIGGLETON.

knows what a trump card I have got in my hand—does he, my dears?' And the delighted old gentleman finished his tea and rushed impetuously off to his study to write to Major Wiggleton without a moment's delay.

I groaned inwardly. Imagine, too, how I felt when, ten minutes later, and her two sisters had left the room, my own

dear Thomasina rushed up to me, put her plump little arms round my neck, and murmured forth in broken accents, 'Oh, Adolphus darling! I am so—o—o happy! To marry a great cricketer has been the one ambition of my life!' Poor little girl! I was about to stop her pretty mouth in the usual way adopted by a fond lover, when my good intentions were nipped in the bud by the sudden entrance of the footman to clear away breakfast.

* * * * * * *

The all-important day has arrived; so has Major Wiggleton (confound him!) and his eleven. The large marquee is pitched, so is the scorers' tent. The Squire, as representative of his side, tosses half-a-crown into the air; the Major, on behalf of his, cries 'Heads!' Heads it is, and the gallant officer elects for his side to go in first. I get off bowling on the score of having a slight touch of gout in the wrist, so am placed at 'point,' and am told by the Squire, who pats me on the back encouragingly, that I am sure to catch the Major, who is batting, in the very first over. (I'll take precious short odds I don't.) Just as 'Play' is called by the umpire, Thomasina's pet Skye terrier, Peter, comes up to my side wagging his tail, and sits down by me, as much as to say, 'I'm come to see if you're as good a man as you're said to be, old boy.' I say to him, 'Go away, Peter, there's a good dog. Go to your mistress; this is no place for you, Peter.' In reply, Peter makes a playful snap at a passing wasp, and then proceeds, in a *dégagé* manner, to scratch his right ear with his hind foot.

Play! The Major hits the first ball to leg for three, amidst loud applause from his side. Play again! Another ball comes. The Squire is trying his slows. The Major tips it with his bat, and the ball comes like greased lightning straight at me. Do I catch it? Yes, I do, in what pugilists call the bread-basket. Peter gives a bark of delight, and I go 'O-u-gh!' making the same sort of guttural noise the typical Indian savage is supposed to make when taking an enemy's scalp. I am doubled up, and as near as a toucher catch it again from 'Cover Point,' who has run swiftly after the ball, and having caught it, shies it back apparently straight at me, and be hanged to him! I am rendered *hors de combat*, of course, for a few moments. The game is stopped, the rest of the Squire's eleven crowd round me, the footman comes forth from the tent, bringing a tumbler of claret-

cup and a message from Thomasina trusting I am not hurt. Hurt! I only trust I have not received my death-blow. I can fancy I see in the papers: 'We regret to announce the death, after a long and painful illness, of that well-known sportsman, Mr. A. Humbug; the result, we believe, of internal injuries received whilst playing in a cricket-match during the past season.'

ONE IN THE BREAD-BASKET.

The claret-cup revives me; the game proceeds. Thank goodness, no more balls come to point. The Major's eleven are all out but two, and they persist in *not* going out, obstinate pigs as they are. The Squire, in despair, changes his field about—I am placed at 'mid off,' wherever that may be, and some one else takes my place at point. I am no sooner in my new situation, as the servants say, than one of the stickers spoons a ball high up in the air, right over my head. Down it comes. Now for it! I have been told that when making a catch, if you drop your hands when the ball descends into them it don't hurt a bit. Unfortunately this particular ball declines coming into my outstretched palms, and alights instead on my nose. I regret to say that roars of laughter greet my misadventure. The two batsmen are running like mad, and half the fielders out are rolling on the ground in convulsions. I retire to the tent, accompanied by Peter, who capers joyfully round me, barking

with delight. My nose, which is of the Wellington pattern, is swollen twice its natural size. I am maimed for life. Thomasina's youngest brother, a nasty little wretch of twelve years old, gives out with fiendish glee that I am now the exact image of old Colonel Mango, an old gentleman resident in the neighbourhood, who, I am given to understand, possesses a nasal organ of Bardolphian proportions. Bathed with iced water I feel more comfortable, the two stickers are at last bowled out, and we all

WELL CAUGHT!

proceed to luncheon. Various toasts are proposed; I am alluded to by Major Wiggleton as the 'distinguished stranger present,' and my health is drunk by the assembled company. Elated by champagne I respond, and playfully say, in the course of my speech, that the Major and his men having given us some specimens of *their* hard hitting in the course of the morning, I trust to give them some of mine in return in the course of the afternoon. 'Hear, hear!' from the assembled company, and I sit down amidst general applause.

The game commences again. The Major places his men, and takes the ball. *I am in!*

The Major, who bowls like a demon, takes a little short run, and away goes the ball. It is wide, thank goodness! but as it passes I hit at it, dropping my bat in so doing.

The Major tries again, evidently angry at the failure of his first attempt, and sends the ball this time with all the force he can muster. I hit wildly at it. Do I hit it? Yes, I do, with the side of my knee, just where the pad does *not* protect it. I give a yell, the pain is so great.

'How's that, Umpire?' shouts the unfeeling Major.

'Hout!' replies Umpire, with a demoniacal grin.

Yes, I have not only nearly had my leg broken, but am put out into the bargain. 'Leg before wicket,' is the verdict, and I retire limping to the marquee, amidst dead silence from all the members of our side. The Squire looks as black as thunder, his two eldest daughters turn their heads away, Peter flies at me, and Thomasina sheds tears.

Owing to my wounds I am unable to appear at dinner that evening; and news reaches me through the footman, who I fancy, by the expression of his countenance, has lost money on the result of the match, which has ended, he sullenly informs me, in a complete victory for the Major's side.

Eleven o'clock comes, and with it a tap at the door. It is Thomasina's maid Julia, with a large package and a note from her young mistress. Dear little girl! how good of her to think of her affianced one in his distress of body. I kiss the note—a scented one—and tearing it open read it. Here it is:—

DEAR MR. HUMBUG, *Thursday Evening.*

I was under the impression that you were a cricketer—a great one. I am sorry to find I am mistaken. Dear Papa says he does not believe you ever played in your life before. I am of the same opinion. All is over between us for ever. I don't think I shall ever get over the defeat of to-day. My dream of happiness is over, and my heart is broken; I only trust your nose is not. Trusting that you will find a companion through life more suited to you than I could ever hope to be,

I remain, yours miserably,

THOMASINA LILYFIELD.

P.S.—I return your letters and presents.

I left the Lilyfield mansion the following morning before

any one in the house was up, and returned to town by the early morning train; and I don't think, gentle reader, you will ever again hear of the noble game of cricket being participated in by A. Humbug, Esq.

MEM.—I have just read in this morning's paper the announcement of the marriage of Major Wiggleton, of Poppleton Park, to Thomasina, youngest daughter of John Lilyfield, Esq., Bumblebee Grange, Buttercupshire.

Such is life!—A. H.

STUMPED!

'DICK DOWNEYBIRD'S DODGE.'

MR. RICHARD DOWNEYBIRD.

TRAVELLING down one day by train, in company with a friend, bound for the Epsom Station of the South-western Railway, with the view of making part of the crowd which annually collects on the adjacent Downs to witness the greatest event of the year in the Sporting Calendar—to wit, The Derby, I was very much amused, not to say edified, by the conversation which was carried on *en route* by our fellow-passengers in the carriage. These gentry were one and all, apparently, betting-men of an inferior degree. They all seemed to patronise the same tailor with regard to their clothes, which were of course of the loudest patterns obtainable. The very diamond rings which embellished their uncommonly dirty fingers were all of the same size and pattern; and, needless to say, their conversation was as full-flavoured as the evil-looking cigars—weeds with a vengeance—which they persistently puffed with a great air of satisfaction (how I envied them their stomachs!) all the way to Epsom.

Having discussed the great race in all its bearings, these gentlemen sportsmen suggested a friendly game at Napoléon, but not one of the party, much to my relief, being able to produce that which is essential before engaging in that favourite amusement, viz., a pack of cards, they were obliged once more to fall back on conversation as a medium for passing away the time. So they commenced one by one relating with great gusto those special bits of luck—and, I might add, of rascality—in their respective careers that had proved in their cases the stepping-stones to future fortune, if not fame. The first *raconteur*, a dapper, shifty-eyed little man, at once the dirtiest and flashiest of the lot, and endowed, apparently, with an amount of native impudence that no misfortune would be capable of keeping under, proceeded to tell how, when clean broke as to his finances, and with, to use his own expression, 'not a blessed mag in his pocket but thirty bob,' he repaired cheerfully to the Gun Club at Shepherd's Bush, there to finally try his luck and take his chance of emerging from the shooting enclosure either a 'man or a mouse.'

'I waited and looked on at 'em shooting for some time,' said Impudence, 'before I durst venture on a bet; and lucky I did, for they was so smart, most on 'em, that the birds, poor things, was down pretty well before they had time to get out of the traps. At last I see about the bloomingest-lookin' mug as ever I set my blessed eyes on, strut up to the mark, as cocky as you please. Thinks I to myself, "You're the bloke for my money." A precious good opinion of hisself he seemed to 'ave too, for he laid three to one here, there, and everywhere, until at last the ring stuck out for fours. No! he wouldn't stand that, and he was just a goin' to turn round and tell 'em to pull, when I bawls out, "I'll take a 'underd to thirty!" "*Done!*" shouted he, in reply, turning round and giving me a nod. The next minute the string was pulled, and about the best bird as ever you saw—good luck to him!—flew out of the trap, and Mug had lost his bet, for he missed him clean—both barrels; and so did the coves with guns on the watch outside the enclosure, for I heard fifty shots if I heard one, and the jolly blue rock beat the lot of 'em handsomely, and the last I saw of him was a disappearing over the distant housetops as game as a pebble. Mister Mug paid me all in notes directly afterwards. I won two 'underd

more before the day was out, and,' wound up Impudence, 'I've never looked back since—not wunce.'

'And supposin' you'd a lost, how then?' inquired his next-door neighbour.

'Supposin' I'd lost? ha! ha! that's where the joke comes in, that is,' replied the unblushing hero of Shepherd's Bush. 'Supposin' I'd lost? Why, I should have weighed in, in shillings instead of quids—that's what I should 'a done. My thirty bob was there all ready, so nobody couldn't have said nothin'. I was precious glad though when Muggey came round to settle, and I felt a bit anxious, I can tell yer, until I felt the flimsies—all new 'uns they was, and as crisp as bits o' toast—safe in my pocket. A few more turns like this here, thinks I to myself that night when I went to bed, and I shall have the missus drivin' round and round Ide Park in her bloomin' kerridge.'

The little man's neighbour in the corner, a stout-built, burly ruffian, with a flattened nose, which looked as if some one had at some period or another applied his fist to that organ with no gentle hand, now proceeded to impart to the company the ingenious manner in which he had once contrived to make a snug little pile all to himself. A certain greyhound was a great favourite for one of the principal coursing events, and this burly ruffian, having laid against him for all he possessed, and more, determined to make victory sure for himself by settling the dog in question for the time being. This he succeeded in doing by first hocussing the trainer, and then, when that worthy and his charge were wrapt in sweet repose in the room they occupied for the night at an inn near the scene of action, stealing in, and opening the window and door so as to make a thorough draught. He then slipped off to bed himself and awaited the result. It came off as he fondly hoped; the night was a bitterly cold one, and the consequence was that the wretched greyhound was found in the morning suffering from a very severe catarrh—an ailment that of course placed him *hors de combat* for the event he was entered for. He did not, indeed, succeed in running up.

The train reached Epsom just as this highly respectable sportsman was finishing his artless tale, so we were unable to obtain the valuable hints from the rest of the company as to how to set about accumulating a rapid fortune, which we no doubt should have, had our journey been a longer one.

Not long after this, I was smoking a quiet cigar one fine night, in the company of a friend, when I proceeded to relate for his benefit the two playful little reminiscences just recorded.

'Wait a bit, old fellow,' said my companion, when I had concluded. 'I must tell you an artful dodge, invented and carried out some years ago by that unmitigated old scamp, Dick Downeybird, the trainer, and I think, when you hear it, you will agree with me that it beats both those you have just related hollow.

'The story is a perfectly true one, for it was told me shortly after old Dick's departure from this wicked world by a man who was in his employ at the time, and who afterwards came into my stable in the capacity of helper. I will vouch, too, for the dodge coming off, for I witnessed it myself—nay, more than that, lost money on it. Old Dick, you must know, had a farm and training-stables close by me in ——shire, and his principal occupation was buying up all the good-for-nothing brutes he could lay his hands on, that were no good for racing, turning them into steeplechasers, and selling them with great profit to himself. He certainly had the knack of converting cripples into sound ones, and horses "wot wouldn't go" into horses that would better than any one I ever knew or heard of. He was a regular old coper, in fact; and such a pleasant way with him he had, that, upon my word, before you had been in his company five minutes, you felt inclined to believe in his virtues to any extent. He had trained in all parts of the globe—India, Spain, Russia, and France—and, I believe, began life in a Circus; some said as clown, but most likely as ringmaster: however, as to that I can't say. All I know is, his experience with horses must have been very large, for he could do almost anything with them—quite a Rarey he seemed to be, indeed. Well, amongst his team that came out on to the Downs one morning appeared a bay three-year-old colt, called Lillebullero, and which Dick had just bought, dirt cheap, out of a selling race at Newmarket, and brought home in triumph. Lillebullero was either one of the most worthless animals in training, or else he was one of the most unlucky, for in the round dozen of races in which he had competed, he had been either second or third on each occasion. I took rather an interest in the horse myself, for I used to bet a good deal in those days, and, as it happened, had backed Lillebullero nearly every time he had run; so I often used to

canter over to old Dick's place, watch the horse do his gallops, and inquire how he was getting on. I thought that, in all probability, Dick would have tried to turn him into a steeplechaser, or, at all events, tried him over the sticks, to see whether he couldn't eventually make a name for himself at hurdleracing, which was just becoming fashionable again. But no; he kept sending him along as if he meant going in for one of the Spring handicaps with him. Well, I went abroad in January—Dick had bought the horse in October—and when I got back to England at the end of March, on going over to the farm one morning to have a chat with its astute owner, and ask how Lillebullero was going on, I found that worthy in close confab with a sportsman of my acquaintance, none other than young Augustus Midas, of Swellborough Park, son and heir to old Midas, the millionaire from Manchester, who had bought Swellborough two years ago, cut the shop, and set up as a country gentleman.

'Old Midas himself was a terrible old snob, but the young 'un, "Gus," as he was called, was not half a bad fellow; he was fond of sport of all kinds, and, above all, racing, and could ride above a bit. He had come over on this particular occasion to see if old Dick had anything in his stables likely to suit him for a special object he had in view—none other, indeed, than winning the County Cup at the forthcoming Swellborough races. A horse that he had had in training for some time had just broken down irretrievably, and so, in his dilemma, he had come to see what Dick could do for him. Just as I arrived, that worthy, having shown him all the rubbish in the place, had come up at last to the show of the shop, none other than my old friend Lillebullero. The horse certainly did his trainer credit. Though not thoroughly wound up, of course—there being no occasion for it—he looked thoroughly fit and well in himself, his eye was clear and bright, and you could almost see your face in his coat, it shone so. His legs, too, were seemingly as sound as when he was foaled. No wonder that a sly twinkle in Dick's eye denoted that he guessed pretty well that he had landed his man, as indeed he had.

'A rough-up on the adjacent Downs was now proposed, rather to my surprise, by Dick himself. "Why should he expose the horse?" I thought. "If another horse gets to his head, the chances are he'll cut it, and Gussy won't buy him." However, it was no affair of mine. A trial was proposed with a

five-year-old plater of Dick's, a useful old horse, as game as a pebble, named Don Quixote, who was always picking up 100*l.* plates for his wary old master, the distance to be as near as possible a mile and a half, and Lillebullero to give the old 'un a stone. Accordingly, having first adjourned for a quarter of an hour to the house for a refresher in the shape of some wonderful brown sherry, that old Dick produced with conscious pride, we mounted a hack a-piece and sallied forth for the neighbouring Downs. A racing trial has been so often described —been done to death, indeed—that I won't enter into particulars in this case. Suffice it to say, that the four-year-old, having waited on Don Quixote according to orders, closed with him a quarter of a mile from home, and, eventually, after a capital race, beat the old horse cleverly by half a length. It was a good performance, there were no two ways about it, and one that determined me to keep an eye on Lillebullero, and back him once more the very first time he ran. The horse, too, wasn't half fit, as I knew, and could be made ever so much better by the time the Swellborough meeting arrived. Of course the sporting Augustus bought him, though what the figure was I don't know, but it was a pretty stiff one you may be certain, and the next morning the renowned Lillebullero took his departure from his old quarters at Dick Downeybird's in charge of Gussy's head man, bound for the former's stables at the paternal abode, to be got fit for the County Cup, under the watchful eye of the great Mr. Tipple, Gussy's private trainer.

'Well, April arrived in due course, and brought with it its usual accompaniments—showers, plovers' eggs, gout, and last, but not least, our annual institution the Swellborough Races; and a very great event it is in our yearly programme, I can tell you. There is the race-ball of course, and then most of the families round about filling their houses for the event, a lot of dinner-giving and pleasant little dances are the natural result. Betting-books are produced after dinner, stolid country squires, who have never done such a thing before, find themselves backing Tom This against Captain That for the County Cup. The ladies, bless their innocent hearts! are, of course, well on their respective fancies; in fact, for at least a week before the great event the usually quiet old county is turned completely upside down. Pretty Miss Muffet, the Rector's daughter, has put aside for

see page 28.

the time being the flannel petticoat she was so busy on for old Granny Trotter, and may now be seen stitching away for hard life at a purple and white racing-jacket for the man of her heart, young Tom Larker, who is to make his first appearance in silk in the steeplechase on the first day. Lucky Tom! What a hero she will think you, as you walk your horse down the course and kiss your hand to your lady-love in the paternal waggonette! How she will, regardless of her losses in gloves (for she has backed you heavily, Sir), pity you, and long to

KEEPING THE COURSE.

embrace you, muddy as you are, when you tumble into the brook—for you can't ride a bit, Tom—you can't, you know you can't. Lady Jane Sheepshanks, too, has actually made a book on the race; but then, as old Miss Meagrim says, with a spiteful sniff, "She *is* so fast! I should never be surprised, my dear, really, at anything her ladyship did."

'Well, the important day arrived as usual, and the ball was set going with the Farmers' Steeplechase, which was landed by

old Bill Shepherd as usual. I forget how many consecutive years he has won it, but a good many. A great favourite with the natives is old Bill—"The People's William" they call him—and he is cheered lustily by Joe and Gearge and Giles as he canters down the course in the preliminary on his little brown horse, Gingerbread Nut. And when he wins the enthusiasm is quite overwhelming. Old Gingerbread Nut has scarcely a hair left in his tail by the time he gets back to the enclosure.

'The next event on the card is the Innkeepers' Plate, a selling hurdlerace, which ends in a glorious wrangle, and then up go the numbers for the *pièce de résistance* of the meeting, viz. "The County Cup," for gentlemen riders only. Thirteen runners. Capital! And, for a wonder, they are all weighed out only half-an-hour behind time.

'"Hallo!" says a stranger on the drag I was on, "here's a gent who thinks he's somebody, by the look of him. Who is he?"

'"H'sh," I whispered to him; "that's Dandybrush, late of the Queen's Roans. 'Haw Dammy' Dandybrush they call him. And that's Lady Betty Martin, his *fiancée*, sitting on the box in front of you."

'Dandybrush is one of the great guns of the hunt, and walks his horse past the stand, with his nose in the air, as if the whole place belonged to him, eliciting a deal of chaff on the way.

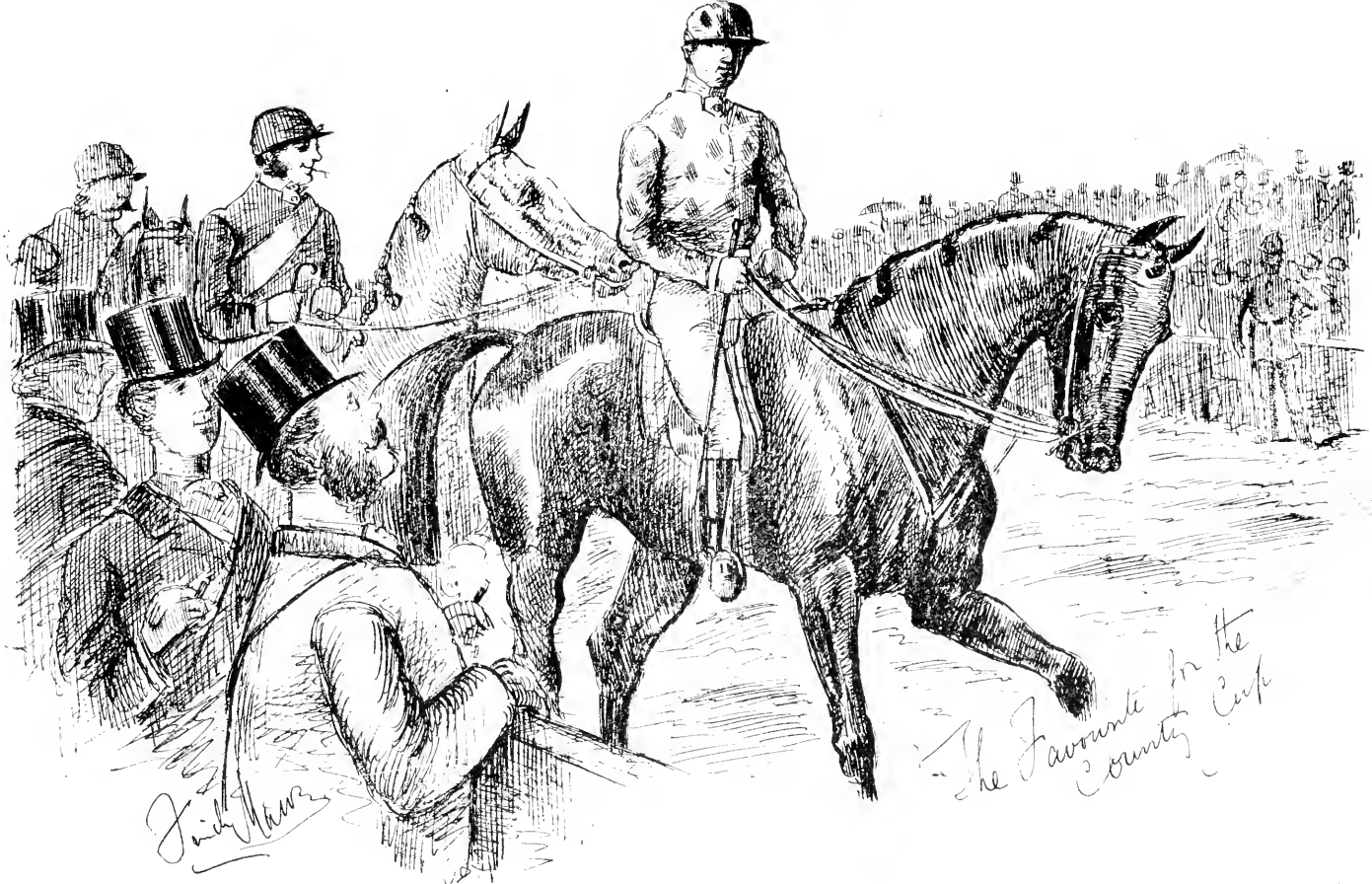
'The last to emerge from the paddock is young Augustus Midas, on my old friend Lillebullero; and uncommonly well the horse looked, doing really a deal of credit to his renowned trainer, Mr. Tippler. I hurried off to the ring forthwith to do a little business on my own account, so much was I impressed with the horse's looks. If Gussy can only ride him, I thought, I don't see what is to beat him.

'"I'll take 6 to 4; 6 to 4 I'll take. Who'll back one? Won't *anybody* back an outsider?" yells one gentleman in despair, as I enter.

'By Jove! thought I, something's being served up pretty warm; what can it be? "What's Lillebullero's price?" I inquire, of a sportsman neatly attired in a purple coat and a yellow hat turned up with blue.

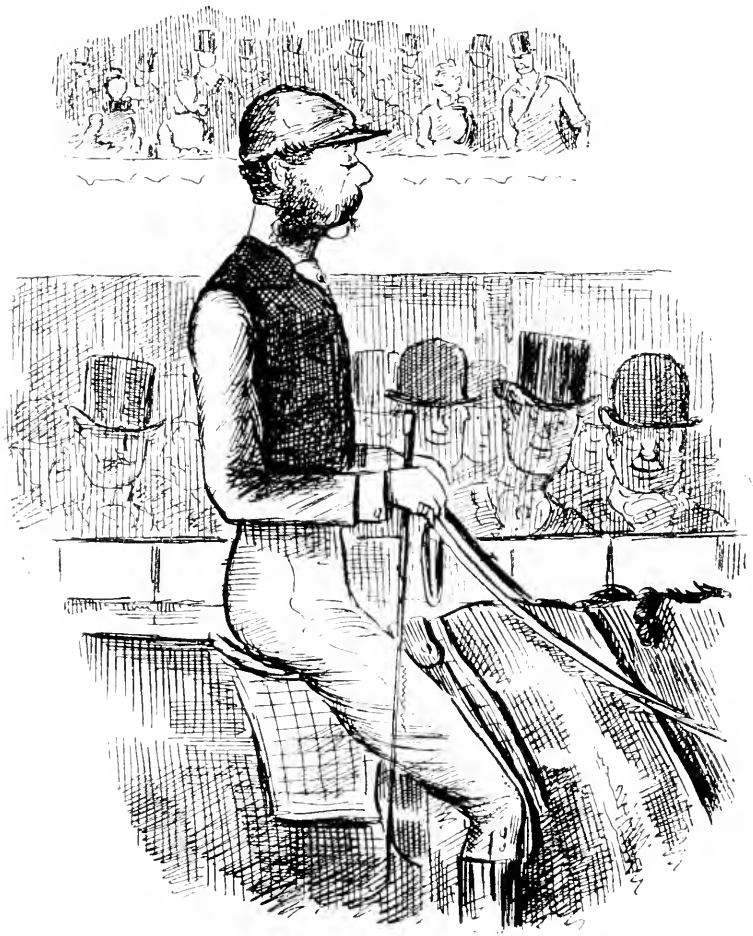
'"I'll take 6 to 4, Sir," he responds, politely.

Elbowing my way through the mob into Tattersall's ring, I found out that the smaller fry were not exaggerating matters. Lillebullero—there was no mistake about it—was a red-hot



see page 28

favourite. The end of it was that I laid the odds in ponies three times, and, as a wind-up just as the flag fell, a hundred to eighty in one hand. And now it was up with the glasses, for here they come. Now they're round the bend and well into the straight.



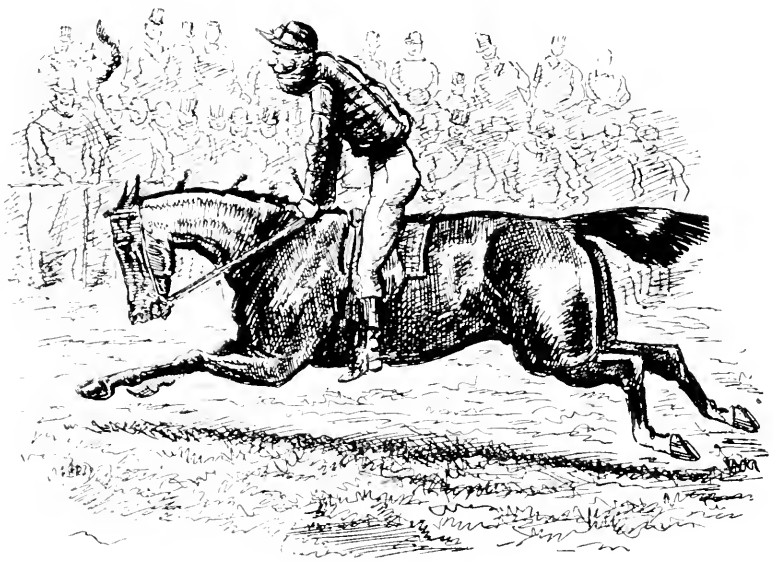
CAPTAIN DANDYBRUSH, LATE OF THE ROAN.

Something's a good last; what is it? Oh, it's old Haw Dammy! Glad of it, the conceited ass!

'Lillebullero walks in!' now shouts an excited sportsman at my elbow, nearly gouging me with his umbrella in his enthusiasm. "Lillebullero wins! A hundred to one on Lillebullero!"

'And so it is; the horse is winning in a common canter, though that ass Gussy is drawing it rather fine, hang him! Thinking

the race was over, I turned to make my way out of the ring before the crush began, when a yell, coming from apparently every throat on the course, made me turn hastily round. Good heavens! what had happened? Why, simply this. Within five yards of the winning chair Lillebullero had stopped, just for all the world as if he had been shot, and Augustus Midas, thrown clean over his head, was sprawling on his back in the middle of the course, just like one of Messrs. Painter's turtles when about to be prepared for soup. And what had won? Why, the People's William again, confound him! on a beastly old screw belonging



THE PEOPLE'S WILLIAM.

to—who do you think? Why, none other than the immaculate Mr. Richard Downeybird!'

* * * * * * *

'"How was it?" you ask. Why, it was about the biggest plant that ever was. Dick Downeybird, as I told you, had once upon a time been in a Circus, and knew, of course, all the tricks in the profession. The old sinner had taught Lillebullero to stop short in a gallop when he hollered "Woh!" to him, and on this occasion he took care—so his late retainer, now in my service, told me—to promptly secure a front place next the rails of the stand, and when the horses came up he shouted out the familiar word at the top of his voice. Lillebullero obeyed orders to the letter,

and you know the result. A capital day's work the old man must have done, for, besides backing his own horse, who started at long odds, he no doubt laid heavily against the favourite.

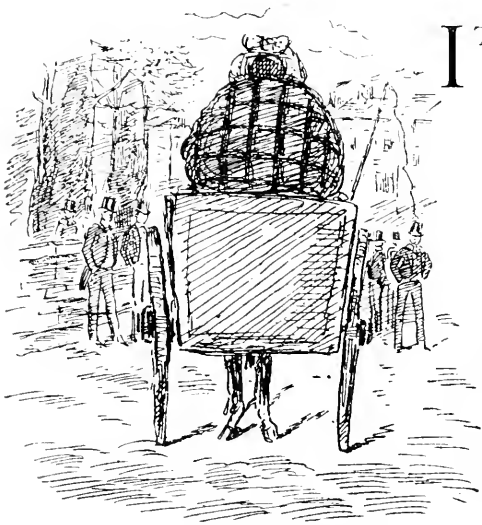
'Augustus Midas was so disgusted that he gave up racing, and sold Lillebullero the very next day for less than half what he had given for him.

'Altogether, old fellow,' wound up my friend, 'it will be long before a lot of us down in those parts forget what is commonly called "Dick Downeybird's Dodge."'

A MATINÉE MUSICALE.

DOLLY DUMPLETON'S HARRIERS.

CHAPTER I.



AN EARLY MORNING SKETCH AT ETON.

IT is the seventh, or if you prefer it, the first day in the week, and the family at Oakapple Park having just finished their usual fat Sunday luncheon, are preparing to go their different ways. As they rise from the well-spread table let us see who they are. First on the list is the mistress of the establishment, Mrs. Dumpleton, a plump, jolly-looking widow, age somewhere on the wrong side of fifty. Secondly come her three daughters Laura, Isabella, and Violet, a trio of pleasant-looking young women; Miss Violet, or 'Vilet,' as her mother calls her—the youngest, indeed—decidedly approaching to the 'very pretty' order of architecture. Thirdly comes the pride of the widow's heart, the very apple of her eye in fact—to wit, her only son Adolphus, a short, stout, plain-featured, young man, commonly called by his family and friends 'Dolly.' Master Adolphus then, having spent a year or so at Cambridge, and failed ignominiously in his 'little go,' has, what he calls, chucked the whole thing up, and at the present moment is comfortably located at his mother's home, giving his whole and entire attention to sports of the field in general, and hunting in particular. Lastly must be mentioned an addition to the family circle in the shape of a good-looking, blue-eyed, curly-wigged youth, like Dolly, until lately a shining light of the 'Varsity,' Charlie Lightfoot by name, or, as he is elegantly called by his friends, 'Cabby,' a nickname given to

him when a boy at Eton—'a happy boy at Drury's,' as the late Mr. Praed has it—in consequence of a certain escapade he engaged in whilst there, and which nickname had, of course, stuck to him ever since. 'Cabby,' merriest of Etonians, the favourite alike of boys and masters, was as full of his tricks in those days as a bagful of monkeys. Was a ride to Ascot, or a poaching expedition to Ditton, or any such forbidden amusement set on foot, you might be pretty certain Master Lightfoot was one of the party, and in all probability the originator of the plot. His feat of driving old Mother Dell's donkey-cart about one morning (Mrs. D. having previously been enticed away from her vehicle) all through college, until pulled up short by one of the masters, was a good deal talked about at the time by both the head master and his tutor. (Old Missis Dell, for the benefit of the uninitiated, was a stout old lady, who used to drive into Eton early every morning in her donkey-cart, the said cart being filled with eggs, milk, cream, &c., which she used to sell to the boys with much profit to herself.) But it was quite put into shade the following half by an exploit which procured him the honour of a visit to the headmaster in the library* the very next morning, from which apartment he might have been viewed emerging about ten minutes after, looking decidedly *hot*. 'Swished and turned down' had been the punishment.

'Two birches, old feller!' remarked Charlie, with a grin, taking a friend's arm. '*Two* birches, old feller! It's made me extra hungry, I think. Let's go to Webber's and have some breakfast.'

'Yes,' as his tutor remarked, 'going to Ascot was bad enough in itself, but when it came to dressing up in a Windsor cabman's dirty old hat and coat, and driving four other Etonians in the said cabman's own fly to the races and back—why, it is really *too* disgraceful, Lightfoot,' said his tutor, shuddering; 'too dreadful to contemplate. What *will* your father say? And I only hope, Lightfoot,' wound up the worthy gentleman, 'you won't catch anything from wearing such a dreadful person's clothes.'

'Please, sir,' blurted out Charlie at this point, 'I went to Frizzle's and got shampooed the moment I got back, sir.'

And two days after, the Cabman, with his four companions

* So called because there are no books in it.

in sin, wended their way arm-in-arm to the well-known studio of Messrs. Hills and Saunders, where they were duly photographed in character—Charlie in his cabman's hat and coat, and the other four noblemen and gentlemen in their different disguises—dust-coats, white hats, veils, false whiskers, &c. The photograph was sent home, of course; and didn't the governor laugh at it! And did he give his tutor one? Why, of course he did! and his tutor chuckles over the escapade to this day; and, says 'Cabby,' with much gusto when at any time reminded of the adventure, '*what* a lark it was!'

Oakapple Park, the abode of the Dumpletons, situated, as the glibe-tongued auctioneers would say, in the most lovely part of the favourite county of Featherbedshire, is an uncommonly nice place; and the widow Dumpleton, when she secured it on a lease for seven, fourteen, or twenty-one years, showed a considerable amount of judgment. It is the property of the De Winkyn family, and it came to be let in this wise: Sir Wilfrid de Winkyn, fifteenth baronet, dying one fine morning of general break-up of the constitution, as his wife said—of brandy and water, as his doctor declared—left behind him one child, a boy, aged three years. Lady de Winkyn, his widow, being of a lively disposition and still young, determined to let the place and live on the Continent until the youthful baronet was of age. So accordingly it was placed in the hands of Messrs. Butterwell and Blarney, the eminent auctioneers and estate agents, and soon such glowing advertisements appeared in the *Times*, the *Field*, the *Sporting and Dramatic News*, and a number of other papers, offering Oakapple Park, with its famous shooting and romantic surroundings, to an eligible tenant, as never were. If you could only trust the veracity of Messrs. Butterwell, never was such a place in this world.

About this same period our friend Mrs. Dumpleton became a widow, the late Mr. Dumpleton having cut up very rich, 'far beyond heven our most sanguine hexpectations,' as his widow—who, we are bound to say, good woman though she was, was a trifle indiscreet in the use of the letter *h*—told her friends. Well, as Mrs. Dumpleton was sitting all alone in her weeds one wet day in her home in the Regent's Park (the three girls had gone to the Baker Street Bazaar, and Dolly was at billiards), she happened to cast her eye down the advertisement sheet

of the *Times*, when the first thing she beheld was Messrs. Butterwell's advertisement. 'And honly twenty miles from town too!' mused she. 'Why, it would be the very thing! The girls could have their Italian masters and music missises down for the day, just the same as here, and Dolly could have his 'unting and all—and there! I declare I'm quite pining for fresh hair.'

Determined to lose no time in the matter, Mrs. Dumpleton had the carriage out the very next morning, and paid a visit to Messrs. Butterwell. The day after, she and Dolly and the young ladies took the train from St. Pancras, and armed with Messrs. Butterwell's card, invaded Oakapple Park in force; and our plump widow was so pleased with all she saw, that before the week was out it was known all over the neighbourhood, that Oakapple Park was let for fourteen years to Mrs. Dumpleton of London. 'Who was she?' was the next question. All the neighbours rushed off at once to the oracle of the county, old Colonel Meddler, who was supposed to know all about everybody, as indeed he generally did.

'Here she is, mum—*here* she is,' said the Colonel triumphantly to the first of his visitors, Mrs. Rundell-Rundell of the Grange, next-door neighbour to Oakapple Park. 'Here she is, mum'—producing as he spoke a three-week old copy of a paper he had ferreted out, and pointing to the column headed 'Wills and Bequests,' in which was quoted the last will and testament of the late David Dumpleton of Regent's Park and Old Broad Street, E.C., informing the outside world how much the late capitalist had left to his widow, how much to Dolly, how much to the young ladies, and so on.

'Parvenoos, Colonel; mere parvenoos; but still, their being so very well off, of course, makes a good deal of difference, does it not?' said Mrs. Rundell-Rundell, whose papa had kept a small tripe-shop in the Borough (but then that fact was amongst the things not generally known, though we are open to bet a slight shade of odds the Colonel knew all about it), thinking what a good thing it would be if she could secure Dolly for her daughter Alexandra Leonora.

'Yes,' rejoined the old Colonel, with a grin. 'Snobs, no doubt; snobs, no doubt, my dear Mrs. Rundell; but as you say, if they entertain at all, they will be a decided acquisition to

the neighbourhood.' And the Colonel rubbed his hands, and wondered within himself what sort of a cook they would be likely to have, for that old campaigner was as greedy an old dog as any one would find in a day's march, and a fearful screw into the bargain, and living, as he did, within easy distance of Oakapple Park, 'wouldn't mind, don'tcherknow,' just dropping in occasionally to put the new-comers in the way of things, provided he was rewarded for his trouble with a good dinner at the end of it.

To return to the family party at Oakapple Park. When we left them they were just getting up from luncheon. It happened that it was what the Scotch are pleased to call a 'soft day,' which, in plain English, means that it rained cats and dogs, so the natural consequence was, that confinement to the house was absolutely necessary to its inmates. Jolly Mrs. Dumpleton betakes herself to the drawing-room, and plumping her comfortable person down into the depths of the easiest arm-chair she can find, takes the last number of *Good Words* in her hand, and her pet terrier into her lap, and in two minutes (for the Sunday roast beef and Yorkshire pudding have made her dreadfully drowsy) is fast asleep. The three young ladies retire to their own particular room, and having first discussed all the dresses worn by their various friends at Mrs. Merryweather's dance, the conversation glides gradually into an animated controversy as to their own extensive gets-up at the forthcoming archery ball. Having arranged everything to their satisfaction, they then give themselves up to their favourite literature—not of the most classic character—until tea-time. Lastly, Dolly and his friend the Cabman, after lingering for a few minutes in the dining-room behind the others to indulge in an extra glass of brown sherry in honour of the wet day, take themselves off across the hall, through the green-baize door, down a small passage, into what is certainly not the least comfortable apartment in the house, namely, that particular one set aside for the consumption of tobacco by Dolly and his friends, and known to the domestics as 'Master 'Dolphus's room.'

'Well, my noble sportsman, and what are you thinking about?' says the Cabman from the sofa, where he is stretched at full length, after a long silence, to his friend and host, who is occupying himself with staring vacantly out of window at the

moist-looking landscape beyond, varying the entertainment with occasionally rubbing his little snub nose up and down the window-pane in an absent and preoccupied manner. 'You're unusually quiet, old feller,' he goes on. 'What's up, eh? If there's any robbery on the cards yours truly can assist you in, say so, and I'm all there when the bell rings.'

'Well, I tell you what it is, Cabby, old boy,' replied Dolly, relighting his cigar, which had gone out, 'an idea came into my head last night, and I've never been able to get wid of it since. I couldn't even help thinking of it all church time this morning, in fact. It's stwuck me, Charlie, vewy forcibly, that this countwy ought to have a pack of hawwiers. There are two packs of fox-hounds, you know, but no hawwiers. Now, it's stwuck me that I might start a pack on my own account, and you might whip in to me. You've got nothing to do, you know, Cabby, now you've been sent down.'

'By Jove, old chap, you *are* a sportsman; hang me if you are not!' replied the Cabman. 'What a lark it will be, to be sure! Mr. Dumpleton's Harriers! What? Why, the thing's as easy as A B C,' continued he. 'There are lots of the beggars advertised every week. We'll look and see now. Whip into you? Of course I will. And now for a squint at the sporting papers. You take *Bell's Life*, old feller, and I'll take the *Field*. Now then, off we go!'

'Here we are, old man!' suddenly exclaimed the Cabman, after a long spell at his paper. 'Here we are! If this don't suit, I'm one Dutchman and you're another. This is the very thing, or I'm much mistaken.' So saying, he read out the following advertisement:—

FOR SALE.—TEN COUPLE of HOUNDS. They will hunt both Fox and Hare beautiful.—Apply to 'R. D.,' Box 26, Cardiff, South Wales.

'Well, but,' remonstrated Dolly, 'it don't say what sort of hounds they are.'

'Oh, but that's the beauty of the thing,' rejoined the Cabman; 'these beggars, apparently, will hunt any mortal thing. So that, if you found the hares run short, you might run a drag, or p'raps a deer; eh? It's my opinion they'll suit you down to the ground. You can't expect to get a swell pack of hounds to-

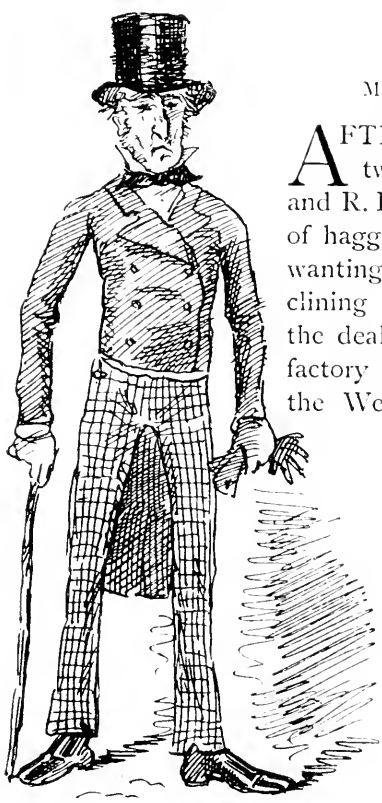
gether all in a minute. I advise you to write and offer "R. D." whoever he is, a pony for the lot.'

And, acting under his mentor's advice, our young friend Dolly took pen, ink, and paper, and wrote to 'R. D.' for price and full particulars of his unique pack of hounds, who would hunt fox and hare beautiful.

And our two friends, much pleased with their afternoon's work, rang the bell for sodas and brandy, and, seeing that the day was not likely to improve, lit two fresh cigars, made themselves thoroughly comfortable in front of the fire, and proceeded to talk over the great harrier scheme until the gong sounded, bidding them go and dress for dinner.

CHAPTER II.

MR. ROBERT DAVIES, M.F.H.



MR. ROBERT DAVIES, M.F.H.

AFTER a week's correspondence between our young friend Adolphus and R. D. or his agent, and a good deal of haggling about a fi'pun note, R. D. wanting thirty pounds, and Dolly declining to give more than twenty-five, the deal was at last brought to a satisfactory conclusion by Dolly meeting the Welshman half way and offering 27*l.* 10*s.*; and R. D. kindly consenting to thus splitting the difference, the bargain was made, and the renowned lot of hounds, who would hunt both fox and hare beautiful, were without further ado packed off by G. W. R. in charge of a man to their new destination, where there new owner was anxiously awaiting their arrival.

And now a word or two concerning their late master, who was quite as unique in his way as his hounds—in fact,

was such a character as one does not often meet with now-a-days.

R. D., then, or Robert Davies, was a Welsh yeoman, who owned the freehold of a farm of about a hundred acres, which he himself cultivated, and on the produce of which he lived—a bachelor, who had never even so much as thought of encumbering himself with a wife. His farm provided him with the means of living in a humble, quiet manner. The fare he partook of was homely to a degree, consisting as it did almost invariably of coarse wheaten bread, oaten cakes, home-cured bacon, home-made butter and cheese, and, occasionally, by way of a great treat, a joint of home-fed Welsh mutton.

His sole and entire amusement was that of hunting, and, as we have seen, he was the proud possessor of a pack of hounds of his own. Kennels he had none, it is true, and if you searched the sporting journals all through from end to end you would not, it is to be feared, find therein any mention of Mr. Robert Davies' hounds. Nevertheless, he *was* a master of hounds to all intents and purposes. With the exception of three or four couple, who lived *with* him literally, for they not only shared with him his only living room, but, if the truth must be told, slept with him in the same bedroom, the hounds were all kept at walk amongst the neighbouring farms. The *modus operandi* of his hunting was certainly unique, and, we venture to state, not to be met with outside the Principality.

On the day appointed for hunting our hero would proceed, horn in hand, to a hill-side from which he could command a view of several miles of the country-side. When there, having blown sundry long-drawn blasts on the small twisted horn he carried, sufficient, as he imagined, to put his brother sportsmen in the district on the *qui vive*, he would return to his farm and prepare his steed for the forthcoming hunt, the said steed being a hardy mountain cob, standing 14.1, of great power of limb, and of never-failing endurance. All his preparations being made, and they did not take very long, Robert, having mounted his hunter, and accompanied by such hounds as happened to be living with him just then, would sally forth towards the place appointed for the meet, every now and then giving a blast or two on his horn as he went along. On his way he would be joined by hounds turning up promiscuously from all sides, and

followed by his neighbours, who, mounted much in the same way as the M.F.H., would, by the time they reached the rendezvous, number perhaps ten or a dozen.

Think of that, ye Leicestershire swells, who think a crowd of two hundred a small field !

Here was arranged the plan of the campaign, and the very important question settled as to which should be hunted, 'fox or hare.'

If the former varmint had been particular of late in his attentions in the neighbourhood, the now collected pack was forthwith taken to the scene of his depredations, and encouraged to try for his drag by shouts of 'Feeox Tyna fe,' 'Windwell e nawth,' &c., being freely uttered by every individual member of the hunt, accompanied by special appeals to each hound by name; those who kept hounds at walk naturally making pointed allusions to their own special charges.

If they got on a drag, the music of the hounds, accompanied by the shouts in various keys of the field, was a thing not to be forgotten in a hurry, whilst the efforts of each individual hound was a marvel of perseverance as they drew the fox inch by inch to his lair, where, having set him afoot, the outburst of melody and the shouts of 'Warno, warno,' uttered by every member of the hunt present, was assuredly calculated, like the celebrated John Peel's 'tally-ho,' to 'awaken the dead.'

If, on the other hand, no fox had been recently heard of in the district, the hounds were told that the object of their search was to be a hare; and they were accordingly addressed in language suitable to the occasion.

Now, for many years did Robert live contentedly on his mountain farm in the midst of his friends and his hounds, enjoying life after his own fashion, as much as most men—more, indeed, than a great many—until one fine day it was ascertained by some enterprising individual that underneath this said farm there lay hidden, untold wealth in the shape of some of the very best Welsh steam coal. This fact procured for Robert an immediate visit from a large ironmaster, who held works at some distance from Robert's farm, who promptly offered to take the coal and work it on royalty. Negotiations were set afoot, and the upshot of them was, that Robert let his coal at a rent and royalty, which for years would bring him in an income of a

couple of thousand a-year. Having thus become a rich man, Robert thought he would like to see the world a little bit, and particularly that portion of it called London. Not having, however, been in the habit of travelling, never having, indeed, been further away from home in his life than the nearest market-town, he naturally wished to be placed under the guidance of some one who knew more of life than he did. So, on a certain day, when he had been to the office of the ironmaster, who was his tenant, to receive the half-yearly sum due to him for royalties, he addressed the iron king somewhat in this style :—

'Mister Crump-tun (Crompton), I should like to see London a bit.'

'So you ought, Robert,' said Mr. Crompton. 'You could not use your money to a better purpose than to enable you to see what's going on in the world.'

'Well, I should be very glad if you would take me with you! When do you go next?' said Robert.

To which Mr. Crompton replied that nothing would give him greater pleasure, and he accordingly promised to let him know when his next visit was to the metropolis.

Robert had not long to wait, for one evening, soon after his interview with Mr. Crompton, he received a note from that gentleman, asking him to meet him at the railway-station the very next morning, and if he pleased they would journey together to London. This, Robert, who was delighted at the notion, did not fail to do, and accordingly turned up in good time as directed.

'Well, Robert,' said Mr. Crompton, greeting him, 'and here you are, eh? By the way, where is your luggage?'

'Luggidge? What luggidge?' said Robert, in astonishment.

'Why, your clothes, to be sure—change of clothes,' said his friend.

'Oho,' replied Robert, 'never you mind me, Mr. Crump-tun; I got a chate (cheat) * and a pair o' stockins in my pocket.'

This was too much for Mr. Crompton, who nearly exploded. However, there was no time for advice on that score, as the train was just drawing up, so they had to make the best of things as they were, and accordingly proceeded on their journey,

* Shirt front.

and in due time arrived at the well-known hotel in Trafalgar Square usually frequented by Mr. Crompton.

Poor Mr. Crompton's troubles soon began. On their arrival in the coffee-room of the hotel, that gentleman asked Robert what he would like for dinner. Would he like some soup to begin with? To this Robert replied that he did not know what soup was.

Mr. Crompton, looking round the room, saw an irascible-looking old gentleman at a table, just commencing his dinner with some soup, reading the evening paper at the same time.

'There,' said he, pointing to the stranger—'there, Robert, that gentleman's having soup.'

Another second, and he wished he had not spoken, for Robert, without a moment's hesitation, strode over to the stranger's table, and as the old gentleman dropped his spoon for a second to take up the paper, at once pounced on it and conveyed a spoonful of the soup to his mouth, to the utter astonishment of the stranger, the delight of the waiter, and the complete mortification of Mr. Crompton, who felt ready to sink into his shoes with shame.

On remonstrating with Robert, all he got for an answer was, 'Well, indeed, to goodness, I did only take a little drop of the nasty stuff, and I will never taste it again—*no, nevar!*'

Poor Mr. Crompton, too, had to make peace with the stranger, which, as may be imagined, was not by any means an easy task. The difficulty, however, was overcome somehow, and Mr. Crompton and Robert at last sat down to dinner, of which soup did *not* form a part.

The next morning, on Mr. Crompton making his appearance in the coffee-room, the first thing he heard was the familiar voice of Robert saying, in a voice of thunder,—

'Waitar, give me the lend of a *coomb* (comb), will you? The dam fools did not put one in my room.'

Mr. Crompton had again to put Robert right, and to explain that the coffee-room was hardly the place to perform one's toilet in, and that travellers usually carried their own combs and brushes. Then the absence of Robert's luggage dawned on him, so he at once supplied him with the necessaries himself.

The question of breakfast was a trying one, for Robert, on

being asked what he would like for that meal, suggested, to the intense gratification of the grinning waiter, that he considered 'toasted cheese' as the greatest treat he could have, and on Mr. Crompton informing him that people did not usually eat that sort of thing in London—at least, not for breakfast—Robert said with withering scorn,—

'Dam, how proud they are here!'

ROBERT ORDERS BREAKFAST.

After breakfast his mentor stated that he had an appointment in the City which would occupy some hours of his time, and asked Robert what he would do to amuse himself until his return, when Robert replied,—

'Oh, you go about your business, Mr. Crump-tun; I will go and look on London a bit.'

On Mr. Crompton's return he found Robert, who told him that he had visited what he was pleased to call 'Westminister Abbey' and the Houses of Pallament, and that a very polite stranger having seen him looking about had asked him if he wanted anything, to which he replied he was only 'looking a bit on London.' The polite stranger then offered to show him the way about, and, said Robert,—

'Indeed, he was very kind, and he did walk with me all round the place, and did tell me the names of the places and all that, and I did think then that I must give him a glass of beer

for his trouble, and we did go into a public, and I did call for two glasses of beer, and there was bread and cheese on the counter, and I did take a bit as I used to do at the Castle at Oxbridge on market-day, and did tell *him* to take a bit, and what you think? they did charge us tuppence each for the bread and cheese! I never paid for it before, *never!* When you do take a bit of bread and cheese down with us they do say nothing to you, only pay for the beer.'

Mr Crompton was much amused by Robert's story, but fearing that the 'kind (?) stranger' had designs on Robert's purse, he asked him what became of his friend. Robert said, 'Well, I did go into a room behind the bar with him for a minute, but there was two gentlemen there playing cards; and he did ask me if I would like to play a game, but I did say no, for they do say down with us that the devil is under the table when you do play cards, and I did go out and I did never see him after;' on which Mr. Crompton enlightened Robert as to the character of his quondam friend, and congratulated him on having escaped unhurt out of his clutches. Many queer incidents happened during Robert's sojourn in town, too numerous for us to mention here, and at last the time for returning home arrived, and Mr. Crompton and Robert took their leave of the gay city, and the latter retired once more to the home of his youth, there to superintend his farming operations, and to enjoy an occasional day's otter-hunting, for his hounds were equally at home on the river as in the covert or on the mountain-side, until the regular hunting season should again come round, when he would be able to follow once more his favourite pastime.

The hunting season arrived in due course, and Robert commenced to hunt the timid hare as had been his wont for forty years. But for the first time in his life he found that hare-hunting was not sufficiently exciting for him, and he longed to hunt nothing but the wily fox. He, however, had a great difficulty to contend with in the scarcity of foxes in his country, for although in the hills there was a good sprinkling of them, it was only on very rare occasions that one was to be found in a country where he could show sport. Under these circumstances, he bethought him that he had heard that foxes might be had from districts where there were no hounds. So on his next visit to Oxbridge, his market-town, he spoke to Colonel Jenkins, a gentleman who

occasionally hunted with him, but who hunted after Christmas at Cheltenham, on the subject. The Colonel soon put Robert in the way of obtaining what he desired, and for some time he was supplied with bagmen from a district where no hounds were kept, and where, from the nature of the country, no hunting could possibly be carried on. A strange fact with regard to one of these bagmen was, that having been marked by Robert before he was turned down before the hounds, and having, after a tremendous run, been lost, he was recaptured and sent down from the very same place whence he had been sent originally, which was certainly fifty miles from the place where he had been hunted.

Robert, however, soon got tired of this kind of sport (?), and the consequence was that the bold Colonel Jenkins found no difficulty in inducing him to accompany him to Cheltenham to see a little of the hunting from that famous spa. Having arrived there, and having, through the good offices of the Colonel

ROBERT MEETS THE COTSWOLD.

obtained a horse, our hero appeared at the meet, and was duly introduced to the Master as a brother M.F.H. The two entered into conversation, and the local M.F.H. asked Robert's opinion

on his hounds. Whereupon that plain-spoken sportsman ejaculated,—

'Who can tell anything about a hound if you cut his ears?' It appears that rounding hounds' ears was, in his opinion, pure nonsense, and was never done by him.

This remark was received by the Master with a loud guffaw, as were many other of Robert's sayings, during his stay among the Cotswold Hills. One of his remarks, while dining at a farmers' ordinary, seemed to have caused much mirth among his hearers on the occasion it was made, and is still repeated in the place. He had been helped to a slice of boiled leg of mutton, and was offered turnips and onions. Whereupon he said, with astonishment depicted on his quaint old countenance,—

''Tis erly for turnips, but, name o' goodness! where did you get the onions?'

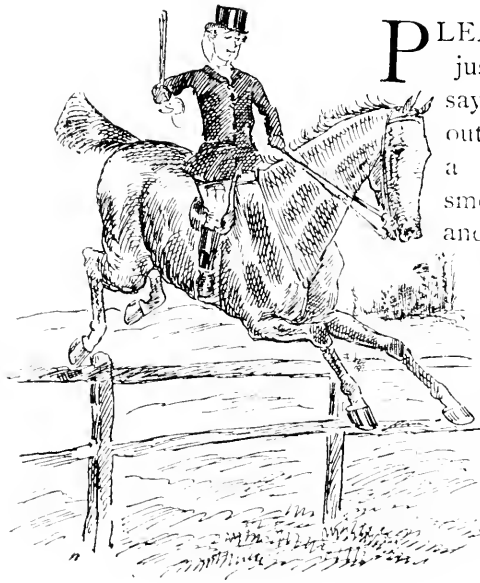
Cheltenham, however, with its numerous attractions, did not satisfy Robert for long. He longed for home and familiar faces, and for the cry of his own hounds once again. So once more he returned to his native mountains.

Soon after his return he was greeted by one of his neighbours and welcomed home, and on being asked the reason of his return before the end of the season, he said, curtly,—

'Well, I'll tell you what it is, the gin is better at the "Hare and Hounds" here, and cheaper too.'

And here we will take leave of the late master of the hounds, who would hunt both fox and hare 'beautiful,' and hope to hear, as no doubt we shall, that by next season Robert has got an equally good lot together, and is again hard at it with his twisted horn and his sturdy cob amongst his native Welsh mountains.

CHAPTER III.



FORRARD!

PLEASE, Sir, the 'ounds 'ave just come, and the keeper says will you kindly step outside for a moment,' says a footman, entering the smoking-room where Dolly and the Cabman, who have just returned from shooting, are smoking a cigar in front of the fire after the fatigues of the day. 'Wake-up, Cabby, old chap, here are the hounds come at last, let's go and look at 'em,' says Dolly, starting up in great excitement, and jogging his companion, who is indulging in a snooze in his arm-chair. (What a good thing, by the way, is a snooze in an arm-chair after shooting or hunting, previous to adorning oneself for dinner.) 'Come on!' says he again, running out of the room, from which he is soon followed by his friend.

Sure enough, in the stable-yard they found the hounds, who would hunt both fox and hare beautiful, in charge of a little, bright-eyed, shrivelled-up mortal, who had brought them all the way from Wales; whilst looking on at Master Dolphus's new purchase were the keeper, an underkeeper, the coachman, all the helpers, and the gardener. Dolly was disappointed at the hounds at first sight, they not being in the least what he thought they would be—in fact, they were rough hounds, an animal he was totally unacquainted with. The Cabman, however, thought they looked like business, and the old Welshman who brought them declaring, with many oaths, that they would hunt uncommon, there was nothing more to be said, and without more ado they were packed off to the loose boxes prepared for them, and made

comfortable for the night, whilst the old Welshman, who rejoiced in the name of 'Moses,' was taken off to the servants' hall, where he considerably astonished the inmates during the evening. The fact was that Moses was in the habit, when amongst his native mountains, of talking nothing but his native lingo, and as what little English he did know, and it was not much, was principally bad language, it was not to be wondered at that the footman should express his 'candid apinium,' as he called it, 'that he had never heard such a hawful old feller to swear in the whole course of his life.'

The next morning Dolly and his friend were up betimes, and, breakfast despatched and cigars lighted, were soon among the hounds. The names of each, written on a label, were fastened to their collars, so that the old Welshman's services were no longer required, and he was packed off home again with a substantial 'douceur.' Dolly and the Cabman then got on their horses, and filling their pockets with biscuits for the benefit of the hounds, trotted off for a ride along the road with them, just to make their acquaintance.

They were certainly a most varmint-looking lot, as hard as nails, and, with the exception of making a rush at Mrs. Dumpleton's favourite tabby cat, whom they met coming from a poaching expedition, as they were trotting along through the park, they behaved remarkably well.

This sort of thing went on every day until the end of the week, by which time Dolly and his whipper-in knew all their names by heart, and the hounds knew them; and the opening meet was fixed definitely to come off the very next Wednesday at Oakapple Park. Accordingly cards of invitation were sent off to all Dolly's friends, inviting them to the hunt, which was to be preceded by a champagne breakfast.

Now, as we have before mentioned, Oakapple Park is situated in that favourite county, Featherbedshire, and is not twenty miles from the metropolis, and we may as well mention that Dolly, in telling his friend that there was a fine opening for a pack of harriers, was in a manner utterly wrong. Harriers there were none certainly, and for the very good reason that a more unsuitable country for them could not well be. It being what the auctioneers call a richly wooded country, you could not cross three fields scarcely without coming across a nine or ten acre

covert, at all events, if not larger. Another thing was, that it was a most unsporting part of the world. Not only were the gentry not much given to the chase, but the farmers were also, with but few exceptions, a most unsporting lot; foxes were found dead in abundance, and a blank day with the two packs of hounds who hunted the country was a very common occurrence.

Now, about half-way between Oakapple Park and London, the flinty arable land, the small fields, the hairy fences, and the big woods suddenly ceased, and a very fine stretch of grass country met the eye—in fact, with the exception of the fields being a bit smaller, as nice a bit of country as you would find in the vale of Aylesbury, or any other of the grazing counties. This part of Featherbedshire was never visited by the foxhounds. Occasionally her Majesty's staghounds, meeting in the Harrow country, would bring their stag that way, and sometimes a scratch pack of draghounds from town, with a lot of what the farmers call 'rubbish' in their wake, would make their appearance, to the great annoyance of the plump graziers of the district, the hunt generally terminating in a fight between some of their men and the cockney sportsmen, to be followed by sundry angry letters to the papers, and an action or two for damages for alleged assault and battery on one side and trespass on the other.

Now it happened, that just on the borders of this grass country lived at a place called 'The Grange,' along with his parents, a lively youth named Tailby—Tommy Tailby—who had been to Eton with the Cabman, and at Cambridge with Dolly. He was, of course, bidden to the hunt. Now, Master Tommy Tailby was a great sportsman, never happy, indeed, if he was not doing something in connexion with the art of venery. If he was not fox-hunting, he was rat-hunting in a barn, ferreting rabbits one day, and perhaps drawing a badger the next. He could ride like a bird, was a nice light weight, and was particularly fond of jumping. Master Tommy was always popping over the fences in the vicinity of his father's place, and he and a fat farmer named Buckwheat, whose fences Tommy more especially patronised, were perpetually at loggerheads. No amount of chaff or pleasantries on Tommy's part would pacify Buckwheat, who vowed he would 'summons the young wagabond'—and summon him one fine day he did; and Tommy vowed revenge. Now, thought he, when he received Dolly Dumpleton's invitation, 'if I

see page 50

can only get him to come and draw here first, we'll try the big turnip-field which lies next that old beast of a Buckwheat's land, and then the whole lot of us 'll go galloperaverin', as he calls it, 'all over his fences; and pay him off beautiful.' And Tommy, delighted at his cleverness, had one of his horses saddled on the spot, and went off express pace to Oakapple Park, to propose the idea to Dolly—jumping, *en route*, two fences and a brand new gate, the property of the injured Buckwheat, who looked indignantly on at him from his bedroom window, where he was having a shave preparatory to driving over to Slopperton Market.

FARMER BUCKWHEAT PREPARING FOR MARKET.

'Danged if I don't summons of 'im agin,' vowed he; at the same time giving his chin a fearful gash in his indignation.

The eventful Wednesday arrived in due course, and the Dumpleton mansion was in a fever of excitement.

'Lor'! how nice you do look, Dolly dear!' said his fond mother, as that hero and the Cabman appeared in the breakfast-room attired in a dress ordered expressly for the occasion. They each sported a very low-crowned silk hat. The coat was a frock

like a huntsman's, and was a warm brown with brass buttons. The waistcoat was white with narrow pink stripes, the step collar of which just appeared above the coat, the collar being met by a neatly-folded white tie. The breeches were white cord, and, like Mr. Soapy Sponge's of immortal memory, broad in ridge and furrow; and, lastly, the boots were of patent leather with very brown tops. Altogether a very workmanlike get-up, and doing Dolly and his tailor a deal of credit. The big clock in the stable-yard strikes ten, and at the last stroke of the hour up tittups, on his sturdy black cob, old Colonel Meddler, always to the fore when there is anything in the shape of eating and drinking going on. The Colonel can't bear being hurried over a meal. No hurriedly-bolted slice of ham and a glass of champagne, and a jump into the saddle, for him. No, the Colonel lives to eat, makes a business of it, in fact, and he will be the first to enter the dining-room on an occasion of this sort, and will munch, munch, growl, growl, guzzle, guzzle, until he has stowed away as much as he thinks will do him until dinner-time. After that he will, as he terms it, 'talk to you.' After the Colonel, canter up becomingly the three Misses Fakeaway with their brother, home from Harrow for the holidays, to play propriety. Next arrives, in her barouche, accompanied by her two plain and decidedly overdressed daughters, Mrs. Rundell-Rundell. Then follow in a cluster the Lumkins, the Tolworthys, Captain and Mrs. Flummery, Mr. and Lady Cecilia Snapshot, Mr. and Mrs. and the Misses Bounceaway of Cedar Lodge, and lastly, his hack all in a lather, our friend Tommy Tailby. Munch, munch, munch, chatter, chatter, chatter, is soon the order of the day; pop, pop, pop go the champagne corks. Gracious! how the tongues are going! Everybody is speaking at once. At last a move is made—but Dolly and the Cabman have disappeared. Where can they be?

'Oh, here they are! hounds and all. How touching! How *very* touching!' ejaculates, with much feeling, Mrs. Rundell-Rundell. 'Is it not, Leonora?' cries she, ecstatically clasping her diamond-covered, podgy hands, and appealing to her eldest daughter, who is just behind her.

And as every one crowds to the hall door, Dolly and the Cabman trot up with quite a professional air, with the hounds clustering round their horses' heels.

And now every one mounts his or her steed, and away they all go chattering, laughing, and chaffing, and smoking—as jolly a cavalcade as ever was seen. Dolly has yielded to the earnest solicitations of Tommy Tailby, and instead of drawing any of his own land, as he might have done, has promised to trot off straight to Tommy's big turnip-field, where that lively young gentleman says he knows there is a hare, and from whence they are sure to have a gallop over the grass.

As we have before mentioned, two packs of hounds hunt Featherbedshire, namely, the Old Harkaway, commonly called the O. H. H., and the Featherbedshire; and the country round about Oakapple Park belonging to both packs, they hunt it alternately: that is to say, the O. H. H. hunt it in November and the Featherbedshire in December, and so on. Now, one of their very best meets is a place called 'Oldberries,' from whence they trot off and draw a gorse belonging to the estate, which gorse, lying nice and warm as it does, generally holds a fox. This particular season it has only been drawn twice, and on each occasion the O.H.H., whose month it was, have had a rare gallop from there with a regular old turkey-stealing, hen-gobbling old sinner. A fine big fellow he was, and he went away on each occasion in the most independent fashion, though the crowd of tailors from town tried their best to mob him, giving a flick of his fine white-tagged brush as he stole away, as much as to say, 'A fig for the lot of you!' The first time they ran him to ground, and the next lost him altogether. Well, it chanced then, that on this particular morning when Dolly and his friends were to have their first day with his new hounds, our friend the fox, instead of being curled up in Oldberries gorse, as was generally his custom, had taken it in his head to have a stroll in the country by way of a change, and at the identical moment when Dolly and Co. were trotting off to draw Tommy Tailby's big turnip-field, Sly Reynolds, as the yokels call him, was fast asleep in the middle of it. The fact was, he had been up all night on the prowl. The gorse being remarkably short of game, he found a difficulty in obtaining sufficient food, and being a gentleman fond of good living, he betook himself to Coombe Wood, hard by, where, as he knew, they had been shooting all day, knowing pretty well he should pick up a cripple or two. Sure enough a plump Indian-corn-fed hen pheasant, who had been wounded,

was soon collared and eaten. He then killed one or two more, more for the fun of the thing than anything; then he had a nap, and, waking up with an attack of indigestion, he up and trotted off to pay a visit to Tommy Tailby's friend, Farmer Buckwheat, whose hen-roost he broke into, and had great sport in—such fun, indeed, that the noise he made woke old Bucky himself, who loaded his old single-barrelled gun, and let fly at him out of his bedroom window, just as he was cutting across the straw-yard with a guinea-fowl in his mouth. Luckily for him, Buckwheat, in his hurry, had given his weapon such a tremendous charge of both powder and shot that, when he fired, it went off like a young cannon, knocking old Buckwheat backwards, and sending its contents yards over the head of our friend the fox.

FARMER BUCKWHEAT MISSES THE FOX.

And now we find him, as we said before, reposing after his exertions in the middle of the turnip-field, just as Dolly and his train-band boldly enter at the far end.

What is it seems to act like an electric shock on the hounds directly they enter the field? What is it causes old Traveller to set up his bristles and give forth one long-drawn note, and Tallyman, who is close to him, give tongue in a most self-satisfied fashion?

'By Jove! they *all* give tongue.'

'I told you so,' cried Tommy Tailby; 'I knew there'd be a hare here, and by Jingo,' shouts he, 'away she goes. No, it isn't! it's a fox, or I'm a Dutchman. Tally ho! Tally ho!' yells he, in great excitement, as sure enough the fox, who had been curled up fast asleep, jumped up bang in front of old Traveller.

The sporting reader can just imagine the row there was.

Dolly blows his horn, as he thinks he should, as a master of hounds.

'For'ard! For'ard!' shouts the Cabman, sending his horse at

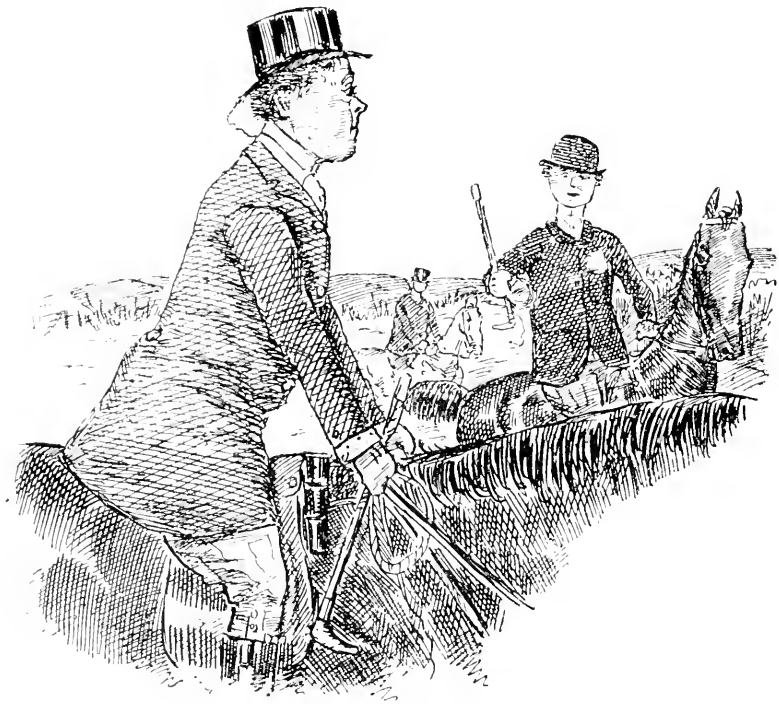
COLONEL MEDDLER.

the fence. Not that much for'arding is required, for the hounds are half-way across the next field by this time.

Smash, crackle, smash. What's that? It's only Tommy Tailby, who has sent his horse at a big white gate leading into old Buckwheat's field, and smashed the two top bars. The three Misses Fakeaway follow him one after another. Their groom smashes the next bar, enabling the rest of the field to get over. Away they all go—all except old Colonel Meddler, who puts his tongue in his cheek, and wags his mischievous old head with

delight, as he thinks what a row there'll probably be about all this in a day or two. He then turns his cob's head, and gets into the high road as quickly as he can.

Meanwhile on go the hounds. And now what's the matter? Dolly, seeing the hounds make a turn to the right, and thinking to make a short cut, goes through old Buckwheat's rick-yard, and is just in the act of opening the gate out of it, when his horse's head is seized by that angry agriculturist in person, who declares he'll be danged if he lets him go.



'BLOW YOUR HORN, DOLLY!'

Tommy Tailby, in the distance, making a pretty good guess at what is up, turns back, rides straight at old Bucky, who does not see him coming, and rolls him over like a rabbit.

'Come on, Dolly! come on! We're losing 'em as it is,' shouts he, and the liberated Dolly and he put on the steam after the now disappearing pack.

Ha! they check on the hill, and the Cabman, who has stuck close to their sterns throughout the run, is making a scientific cast just as the Master and Tommy come up.

see page 56.

'That's done the trick,' says Cabby, in high glee, as the hounds suddenly hit it off again and they are once more off at score. 'What a game it is, ain't it, old boy?' says the Cabman, with a grin, to Tommy, as they ride side by side. 'Never had such a lark in my life,' responds that hero, wondering within himself how old Bucky is, and hoping he hasn't quite killed him.

But see, the hounds are at fault again. Is that some one holloaing? Yes, see, that chap on the gate there has viewed him. 'Blow your horn, Dolly! Blow your horn!' shouts Tommy Tailby.

'Blow my horn, my dear—puff—feller,' puffs poor Dolly, who is quite blown now with his exertions; 'I should be sick if I did.'

The Cabman, who has had a fall, now comes up and caps the hounds on to the holloa.

'Just afore you, dead beat. Sich a big 'un!' shouts the man on the gate.

'Yonder he goes!' shrieks the excited Cabman, as he suddenly views the fox two fields off. 'Put 'em to me, Tommy, put 'em to me, and we'll kill him before you can say Jack Robinson. Hold up, horse,' shouts he, as his horse nearly tumbles on his nose in a blind ditch.

Another second and they are in the same field with the fox. The hounds race for their quarry. Tomboy leads, and pulls him down just as he reaches the hedge, and in a trice fox and hounds are all rolling in the ditch together.

'Who-hoop!' shouts the Cabman, jumping off his horse and running to them.

'Who-hoop!' echoes Tommy Tailby, jumping off his.

'Who—puff—hoop,' shouts Dolly, just arrived.

The Cabman now emerges from the ditch, holding up in triumph the dead fox, followed by the baying hounds. Tommy gets hold of Dolly's horn and performs on that instrument, perhaps the wildest solo ever heard on a hunting-horn; and the Cabman and Dolly holloa till they are hoarse. The three Misses Fakeaway and some of the field now come up, and lastly arrives old Colonel Meddler on his cob. Dolly now presents the brush in due form to the eldest Miss Fakeaway, fastening the mask to his saddle and pocketing the pads; whilst his whipper-in, crying, 'Tear 'im and eat 'im,' in true sporting style, throws the carcase to the pack, but to his great astonishment

the hounds won't touch him. The Cabman was not aware of the fact that Welsh hounds never eat their fox when they kill.

The great run is over. 'Forty-six minutes exactly by my ticker from find to finish,' says the Cabman, lighting his cigar.

Old Meddler at this juncture asks every one if they have got any sherry, and between them all the greedy old man gets about a pint.

Home is now the word. Cigars are lit, and chattering and laughing in highest spirits the company get into the high road once more, and jog along to their different destinations—Dolly and the Cabman, accompanied by Tommy Tailby, leaving the rest at the cross-roads, and making for Oakapple Park.

So much for the run. Now for the results.

Three mornings afterwards, on Dolly appearing at breakfast, he found amongst his other letters the following four, the contents of which so disturbed his mind that he forthwith took them up to the Cabman's room, where that gentleman was still in bed, to seek his advice respecting them. Let us look over his shoulder and master their contents :—

No. 1.

Haverly Hall, Slopperton, November 24th.

Sir,—I am given to understand that a few days ago you, with a scratch pack of hounds, hunted by yourself, deliberately drew for, found, and killed one of *my* foxes in the heart of *my* country—a most unprecedented and, I may add, *unsportsmanlike* act, in my humble opinion. I have to request that for the future (unless you choose to give up the said hounds) you discontinue hunting with the Featherbedshire hounds. —I am, Sir, your obedient servant, Daisyfield.

Adolphus Dumpleton, Esq.

No. 2.

The Kennels, November 24th.

Sir,—I was very much surprised and disgusted to hear this morning that you, accompanied by some friends, took out with you, a day or two ago, a pack of *curs* you have recently acquired, and not only found but *killed* a *fox* (which fox belonged to *me*, the representative of the Old Harkaway Hunt) in the Old Harkaway country. Unless I have by return of post a satisfactory explanation of such unheard-of and unsportsmanlike behaviour, I will thank you not to insult the Old Harkaway Hunt for the future with your presence in the field.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant, George Jellyby, M.F.H

Adolphus Dumpleton, Esq.

No. 3.

4 Clip Street, Slopperton, November 24th.

Sir,—We are instructed by our client, Mr. Benjamin Buckwheat of the Wild Farm, to apply to you for payment of the sum of 25*l.* alleged by him as due for wilful damage inflicted on his land by yourself and friends on Wednesday last. Unless the said sum is paid into our hands within three days from the date of this, together with the sum of 6*s.* 8*d.*, our expenses, immediate proceedings will be taken.—We beg to remain, Sir, your obedient servants, Grubbey and Chouse.

Adolphus Dumpleton, Esq.

No. 4.

Shottlebury Park, November 24th.

Dear Old Chappie,—I am staying here for a day or two assisting to shoot old Rory O'More's pheasants. The two M.F.H.'s of the county shot here yesterday and dined afterwards and slanged you like blazes after dinner for killing one of their foxes. What a lark it must have been! I wish I had been there. At the same time, if I were you, my gay sportsman, I'd chuck them 'ere hounds of yours up, or you'll have all the hunting men up in arms.—Yours as ever was,

Reginald Random.

Just as the Cabman had finished reading the fourth letter a knock came at the door and enter the footman with 'A note from "Mister Tailby," sir.' Dolly tore it open. Thus it ran :—

Dear Dolly,—Here's a game! That old beast of a Buckwheat's bin and gone and took out a summons against me for assault and battery t'other day. You and Cabby ride over and have some lunch with yours truly, and we'll hold a council of war.—Yours ever,

T. Tailby.

The three gentlemen met at luncheon, as proposed by the volatile Tommy Tailby, and at a cabinet council held afterwards in the smoking-room the following important resolutions were put and carried unanimously :—

1st. That the hounds known as Mr. Dumpleton's Harriers be discontinued forthwith owing to the unsuitableness of the country, in the opinion of this meeting, for the sport of hare-hunting.

2nd. That letters of apology be written to Lord Daisyfield and Mr. Jellyby, the respective Masters of the Hounds.

3rd. That Charles Lightfoot, Esq., commonly called the Cabman, being a mutual friend of both Adolphus Dumpleton and Thomas Tailby, Esquires, be requested to proceed at his earliest convenience to

the farm, known as the Wild Farm, and endeavour to propitiate, or in other words, 'to square' its owner, Mr. Benjamin Buckwheat, by offering him compensation in the shape of ten pounds sterling, to be increased, should it be necessary, to the sum known to sportsmen in general as a 'pony,' or, in more civilised language, 'twenty-five pounds.'

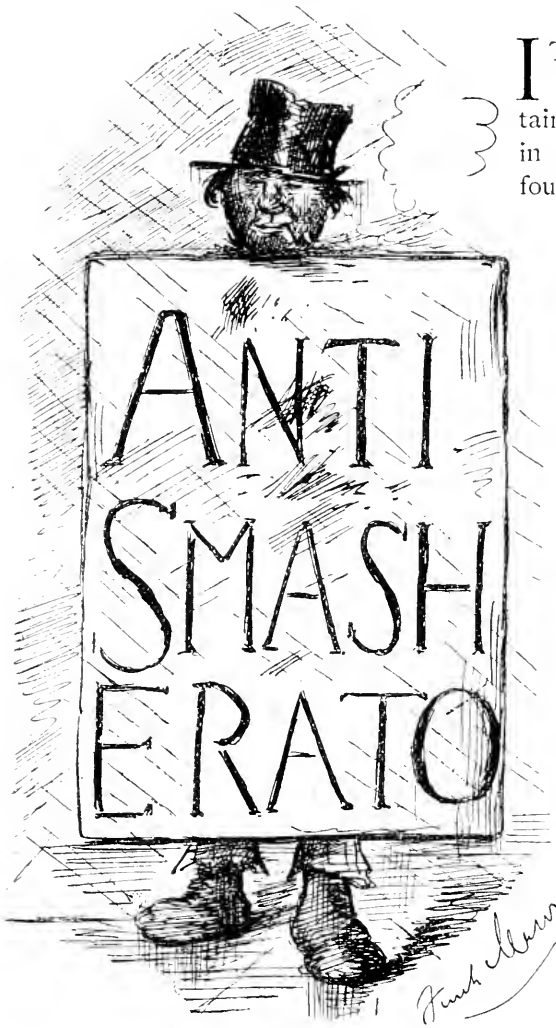
4th. That the said Benjamin Buckwheat is a cantankerous old beast, and that the said meeting do bind itself to take every pportunity in future of annoying the said Benjamin Buckwheat, by riding over his fences, smashing his gates, &c., whenever it lies in their power.

The Cabman, being the best penman of the party, having combed out an advertisement for the sporting papers, giving out that the renowned hounds were for sale again, the meeting, having lighted fresh cigars, and liquored up 'all round,' to celebrate the event, as Tommy Tailby remarked, broke up.

And so came to an end—an untimely end, as we may say—Dolly Dumpleton's Harriers, and if any young and ardent sportsman wishes to possess a pack of hounds of his own, who will hunt not only both fox and hare 'beautiful,' but almost any other animal you can mention, from a stag down to a hedgehog, say—why, he can't do better than apply at once to Adolphus Dumpleton, Esq., Oakapple Park, Slopperton, Featherbedshire.

FOUNDED.

MAD AS A MARCH HARE.



A NEW INVENTION.

IT was about nine o'clock on a certain murky evening in November that I found myself—having only arrived in town that afternoon from a four-years' sojourn on the Continent—chewing the cud of meditation in the shape of a toothpick, in the coffee-room of my hotel, and debating within myself what I should do to pass the time away until bed-time.

I had dined in the coffee-room, and felt, as one generally does after an English dinner, more inclined for a nap than anything else. The fact was, that the dinner was a thorough change to me from the light and airy food I had been accustomed to of late, and the consequence was I rather enjoyed it than not. How different, for in-

stance, the crisp *goujon*, the diminutive *côtelette aux épinards*, the airy *omelette soufflée* of the Maison d'Orée, where I had dined on my last evening spent in the gay capital, to the solid-looking cod and oyster sauce, the truculent rump-steak, with the succulent marrowbone to 'foller' (the latter a suggestion of the waiter's), of the Jermyn Street Hotel! As I have just remarked, it was a variety, and I appreciated it. 'Change of air does a fellow good,' thought I; 'why shouldn't change of food do the same?' And the result was—I am really ashamed to own it—that in the end I gorged myself to that extent that I felt pretty much the same as I should imagine that noble animal the boa constrictor does after having swallowed his blanket. 'What was I to do with myself for the rest of the evening?' was now the important question. If I sat in the coffee-room only five minutes longer, listening to the monotonous ticking from that confounded French clock on the mantlepiece, and the B-flat from the nose of the elderly gentleman in the corner, who had probably eaten double as much as I had, and was now snoring in a plethoric, not to say apoplectic, manner in his chair, I was safe to drop off to sleep myself. I determined, on consideration, to consult the waiter, whose knowledge of London life was nearly certain to be extensive, and who was, therefore, pretty sure to know what was going on in the entertainment line. I was right. That worthy individual was well up, I found, in theatrical matters; though, as he feelingly observed, he could not find the spare time to go much to the play himself. 'If you like the drammer,' said he, 'there's Mister Enery Hirving in 'Amlit at the Lyceum; or if you'd perfer somethink of a lighter kind, there's a wery good B'lesque at the Gaiety they tell me, though I haven't seen it myself. That don't begin till late; so it would give you hample time to 'ave your caffy and liqewer, likewise your cigar, comfortable before you start. Or,' went on the waiter, as if suddenly struck with a bright idea, and lowering his voice in a mysterious manner, 'If you would like to smoke your cigar and 'ear a good song at the same time, there's Harthur Robbuts at the Pavilion Moosic 'All close by. *He*,' said the waiter, confidently, ''ll make you die o' larfin; at least,' added he, apologetically, as much as to say 'our tastes *may* differ, don't you know,' 'he did *me*.' 'Which was it to be?' was now the question. I did not, somehow, feel inclined for

Shakespeare; the burlesque, as I gathered from the evening paper, was a skit on a play I had never seen; so it, consequently, had no interest for me; and though Arthur Roberts might be the most amusing comedian in all London, as in the waiter's opinion he evidently was, I did not, tired as I was after my journey, seem to care, in order to see him, about stewing for the rest of the evening in the vile atmosphere of a crowded music-hall. No! I would, on further consideration, go to none of them; but would smoke a quiet cigar and then to bed. Stay! happiest of happy thoughts! I wonder if my dear old friend Bob Boobleby—'Mad Boobleby,' as we used to call him at Eton—still inhabits the same chambers he did when I left England four years ago? He used to live in this very street; I forget the number, but I remember the house quite well. I'll go and look him up at once; a cigar and a talk over old times with him will be worth all the theatres put together. How stupid it was of me not to think of it before! Accordingly, having despatched the disappointed waiter to my room for my great-coat and hat, and having lighted a cigar, off I went, wondering, as I marched along, whether I should find my old friend much altered. What a cheery bird he used to be, to be sure! It seemed to me only the other day that he and I were in chapel together at Eton, both of us members of the fourth form, and he sitting just behind me, in a moment of playfulness caused me suddenly to jump up with a loud shriek in the middle of the sermon the Venerable Plumtree was in the act of preaching, by making a peculiarly vicious stag-beetle, which he was in the habit of carrying about in his waistcoat pocket, suddenly grip with his pinchers that delicate and sensitive portion of my frame, the lobe of my ear. The master in desk nearest us of course promptly made a note of the occurrence; whilst all the consolation I got from Boobleby was being told by him that I squealed for all the world like a rabbit when collared by a ferret. 'I shall call you "Bunny" in future,' said he. Of course I was put in the bill, and was duly flogged after seven o'clock school the next morning—a frightfully cold one, I remember—and the unfeeling Boobleby, accompanied by his friend the stag-beetle, and a few other sensation-loving members of the fourth form, followed the head master and myself up the much-dreaded stairs, and looked on at my sufferings (ten cuts I received) through a hole in the

swishing-room door. I wonder if he still goes in for entomology, or natural history in any shape? Don't I remember, too, his poisoning his tutor's parrot with blotting-paper? Ha! ha! *he* caught it that time, and I went to see him suffer at the block. He was exceedingly partial, too, to pursuits of a scientific nature. He it was who once—of course strictly in the interests of science—when an undergraduate at Christchurch, amused himself by electrifying the handle of his door and then shouting loudly for his scout. That worthy in due time appeared in answer to the summons, took hold of the handle, and, as a matter of course, experienced such a shock as frightened him for the time being out of his wits, and sent him flying out precipitately into the quad, vowing that Mister Boobleby had bin and gone and stabbed him with a knife.

Before I had finished chuckling over the reminiscence I reached the house where my friend used to live. 'Ah! John, how are you?' said I, as a man came to the door in answer to my ring, whom I remembered of old as Boobleby's body-servant. 'Your master still lives here, eh? Is he at home?'

'Oh yes, Sir; he's always in of an evening,' was the reply. 'Will you walk upstairs, Sir?'

Up I went, and in another minute was once more in the presence of my old friend. Yes! there he was, just the same as ever, and, except that he had grown stout and a trifle bald, not altered in the least little bit. Still the possessor, too, of the same animal spirits, as he quickly evinced by giving me a friendly poke in the stomach that knocked me into the nearest chair, which chair immediately began to play a tune (a musical box being, as I found out afterwards, fixed in the seat), frightening me out of my wits and making him roar with laughter. Laughter, too, of such a vociferous nature that John, rather to my astonishment, suddenly poked his head into the room and told his master, in a subdued voice, that the Master of the Mint was very busy with his accounts, and hoped he wouldn't disturb him. A speech that not only surprised me, but had a most extraordinary and instantaneous effect on my friend Boobleby, who quieted down at once, and proceeded to ask me, almost in a whisper, what I would have to drink.

'Your friend, the Master of the Mint, seems a mighty particular sort of gentleman,' said I, after a short pause.

'*S-h-h-h!*' whispered Boobleby, drawing his chair close to mine. '*S-h-h-h!* Don't talk too loud, my dear fellow; you don't know what ears he has—hears everything, I verily believe—and *so* particular! I daren't offend him, and I'll tell you why. Give me your ear.' Boobleby here came still closer to me, and, putting his mouth close to my auricular organ, said, in a hoarse whisper, 'He's taking care of all my money—a hundred thousand pounds—that and the patent, *you* know, the Antismasherato. What!' Having uttered which words of mystery Boobleby drew his chair away to a distance, and nodded in a Burleigh-like and mysterious manner for fully two minutes.

'What on earth do you mean?' said I, more astonished than ever.

'You've not heard!' he exclaimed, in apparent astonishment. 'Don't tell me you've never heard of the clever Englishman, the patentee of the most wonderful life-preserving invention that ever was—the now world-famed "*Antismasherato!*" Lifebelts and Bluebottles! *Don't* tell me that! You have not? Well, then, behold him. Behold in your old friend the Great Antismasherato! the ruin of all the Accidental Insurance Companies, and the richest man in England!' shouted Boobleby, rising from his chair, drawing himself proudly up to his full height, and giving his chest a mighty slap.

'The Master of the Mint, Sir,' said John, warningly, suddenly appearing again at the door at this point.

'Oh, ah! I *quite* forgot. My compliments to the Master, John, and I hope I didn't disturb him,' replied Boobleby, sitting down again.

'And now, old fellow,' said my friend, 'I'll tell you all about it, and my exciting adventure with the Mad Doctor into the bargain. To begin with my marvellous patent. Antismasherato is an india-rubber costume, invented by me for the prevention of accident to the human frame in any shape or form. Do you wish to prevent your head being stove in by a falling chimney-pot or a cropper out hunting?—Buy my Antismasherato Hat. Do you, having made love to your dearest friend's wife, and the *amour* being discovered by your dearest friend, go about in daily dread of a kick from the injured husband?—Buy a pair of my Antismasherato Continuations at one guinea, and there you are. The injured one may kick away until he's black in the

face; thanks to the Antismasherato bags you have on, it won't hurt you in the least.'

'Oblige me,' said my eccentric friend, suddenly rising and turning his back to me, 'by kicking me.'

In obedience to his command I fetched him a slight kick.

'Have you kicked?' asked he.

I replied in the affirmative.

'Thanks. I did *not* feel it,' said he, sitting down again with an air of conscious pride. 'There you are: that's a specimen of my work. Pretty convincing, too, I reckon. Antismasherato is, in fact, adapted to every vulnerable part of the human frame. My royalties in it bring me in an enormous revenue, and the Master of the Mint, who I pay to live in the house with me, keeps the lot —money, patent, everything, for me—under his bed. Its enormous success and world-wide renown I attribute in a great measure to my wonderful adventure with the Mad Doctor, which I am now, my dear friend, going to tell you all about. You remember, of course, what a mighty hunter I used to be—well, I am just as fond of it as ever—and soon after I had found out this wonderful invention I determined to give it its first trial in the hunting-field. Accordingly I arrayed myself from top to toe in Anti-smasherato clothes. From the crown of my hat to the soles of my boots I was india-rubber all over. Even my horse had Anti-smasherato shoes on; so that, though he was on ordinary occasions a big jumper, the india-rubber shoes transmogrified him into a sort of Spring-heeled Jack. Well, out we went (I selected, by the way, the Old Harkaway country as the scene of action), and, as it turned out, we had *the* run of the season —such a run, in fact, as that celebrated pack had not had for years. Well, the sensation I created was something to dream about, I can tell you. There was my horse jumping as never horse jumped before. The whole hunt stared, as well they might. I fell off twice—once on my head, once on my stomach —but what did I care? I was an india-rubber ball, not a human being. The moment I touched the ground up I bounded like a sprite in a pantomime. In short, as the huntsman remarked, it was quite a *theayter* performance. Well, we killed in the open, and having had enough of it I lit a cigar and jogged off to catch the train back to town, feeling thoroughly satisfied with myself, for I had beaten them all, and the Antismasherato had proved a

complete success; for here was I, having had three awful falls, without a bruise upon me. The noise of horses' hoofs behind me suddenly aroused me from my reverie, and, looking round, I perceived a sportsman, whom I had noticed very forward all through the run, was approaching. A request for a light for his cigar began a conversation between us, and before very long I found myself expatiating to him on the advantages of my wonderful invention.

'"It is, indeed, marvellous," said he; "so much so, that I hope, my very dear Sir, you will still further initiate me into the mysteries of your splendid patent. Here," said he, "is the entrance to my abode," pointing as he spoke to some large iron gates, "and if you will condescend to come in and partake of a glass of sherry and a biscuit, and rest your horse awhile, you will honour me more than I can tell you."

'I agreed, nothing loth, for I had some distance still to ride, and my horse, reasoned I, would be none the worse for a mouthful of gruel, or myself for a glass of sherry. Accordingly in we went, and a precious fine shop my new acquaintance seemed to have. The room I was shown into was simply magnificent.

'"Champagne," said mine host, as a stalwart footman entered the room.

'It was brought in an instant, and glasses were filled and handed round. I drained mine to the toast proposed by my host, viz., "Success to Antismasherato." The wine I thought, though, tasted uncommon queer. "Why, its Zoedone!" I exclaimed, as I took another sip.

'"Of course it is," returned my host, coolly; "I never give my patients anything else."

'"Patients!" said I. "Why, you're not a doctor, are you?"

'"Certainly I am," he answered. "Doctor Softly, at your service."

'"What! the Mad Doctor?"

'"Well, I believe people *do* call me the Mad Doctor," said he, complacently.

'"But you don't think *I'm* mad, do you?" roared I, starting up, upsetting my chair as I did so.

'"No, I don't *think* it, I *know* it," answered he, quietly putting his hand on my shoulder, whilst at the same time he blew a silver whistle which hung round his neck.

'To floor the Mad Doctor was my first proceeding. Shade of Deaf Burke! *Such* a knock-down blow, my boy! To rush to the door was my next. It was locked, so I made one dash for the window, through which I jumped like a harlequin. The room was on the first-floor, but, thanks to the Antismasherato, I was not hurt a bit, notwithstanding the height I fell—fully thirty feet.

A man was walking my horse about. To serve him as I served his infernal master, viz., knock him down and jump into the saddle, was, to a desperate man like I was, the work of a second; and with a loud halloo away I went, down the weird-looking avenue at full gallop, just as half-a-dozen powerful-looking men emerged from the house in full pursuit. The iron gates were in sight. I could just discern in the gloom a man locking them as I approached. "Now or never!" said I, and with a loud shout and a dig of the spurs I sent my gallant steed slap at the big iron gates. The Antismasherato, the great, the glorious Antismasherato on his shoes, did it. My horse jumped the whole lot, big as it was, like a deer, striking back at it as he cleared it—he was an Irish-bred 'un—as if it was a bank in Jock Trotter's country. In half-an-hour I was in the train. The next day I commenced an action against the Mad Doctor for false imprisonment. The trial came on. The jury gave me damages to the tune of 100,000*l*. And the fame of the exploit not only made the fortune of Antismasherato, but me—your old friend Boobleby, the greatest lion of the day.'

A knock came at the door as my friend finished his wonderful story, and John once more appeared.

'Half-past ten o'clock, Sir,' said he, 'and the Master of the Mint wishes to know whether he can come in and go over the accounts.'

'Certainly. Good-night, my dear fellow,' said my friend Boobleby, rising and shaking me warmly by the hand. 'I know you'll excuse my apparent rudeness. Delighted to see you, but business *is* business you know, and the Master likes to go to bed in good time; and the accounts, you know, must be gone into before he retires. So once more good-night. Show this gentleman downstairs, John, and ask the Master to step in.'

A tall, powerful man, certainly not a gentleman, entered the

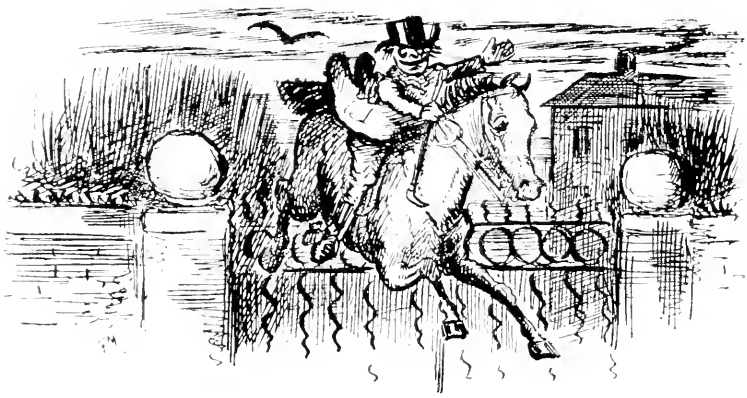
room as I went out of it, and John showed me downstairs, and assisted me on with my coat.

'Poor master told you all about Hantismasherato I suppose, Sir?' said he, as we reached the hall.

'Oh, yes!' replied I; 'and upon my word it seems a really wonderful invention, John. I can't think how it was I never heard of it, or even of Mr. Boobleby's action against the doctor before this.'

Happening to look up as I said this, I noticed a peculiar look on John's face, and then all of a sudden the whole thing dawned upon me. 'Why,' I blurted out, 'you don't mean to say, John, that your master is ——'

'Yes, I'm sorry to say I do, Sir—"Mad as a March Hare."'



THE ESCAPE FROM THE MADHOUSE.

'MY AUNT'S CAT.'

MASTER TILBURY TOPPER.

'CURSE the cat!' roared General Blunderby.

'Twas after dinner, at my aunt Lady Jane Doldrum's. The ladies had just left the dining-room, and the gentlemen, having filled their glasses and drawn their chairs into a circle round the fire (for the night was a cold one), had settled themselves down, preparatory to a good long sitting. That distinguished cavalry officer, old General Blunderby, with his highly varnished, gouty old toes on the fender, and a bumper of my aunt's most excellent claret in his hand, having cleared his throat with a loud 'Ha—hum!' had just pursed up his lips preparatory to his first gulp of that seductive fluid, when 'My Aunt's Cat,' who had been furtively watching the General for some few minutes, crept noiselessly up to him, and putting both paws on to his leg, threw his head well back, and gave himself a hearty stretch, at the same time supporting himself by digging his claws well into the fleshy part of the General's thinly covered thigh.

'Curse the cat!' roared the General, in a voice of thunder, as he jumped up from his chair, upsetting at the same time the glass of claret all over his spotless shirt-front. 'Curse the cat!' growled he again, rubbing his leg the while. 'A *dog* in the room is bad enough, by Gad!' went on the General, purple in the face with indignation, 'but a *cat*, damme ——' And the bare idea caused, I regret to say, the discomfited old warrior to swear most terribly in his very best barrack-yard style for fully

five minutes, thereby greatly disconcerting little Mr. Bleater, the curate, who was one of the party.

This, then, was my first introduction to 'My Aunt's Cat.' Little did I imagine, as I made fun of the General's mishap, that before long this brute of a cat would make me laugh on my own account 'the wrong side of my mouth,' as the saying is.

'CURSE THE CAT!'

It was Christmas time, and I had come down on my annual visit to spend the festive season with my aunt at Cockaroost Court. It was not a bad place either to spend Christmas at, for, beside the fact of my aunt being in the habit of doing things remarkably well in the eating and drinking line, and the house itself being an exceedingly comfortable one, there were lots of pheasants to shoot—they were always kept until I came—and the hunting was not at all bad, considering that it was rather a heavy country, big woodlands, and lots of plough. Then—another thing—I had been brought up from boyhood to consider myself Lady Jane's heir; the consequence was, that

whenever I arrived on a visit at Cockaroost Court I found myself looked upon in that establishment as a very important personage. It was delightfully comforting to my soul, as I smoked the nocturnal cigar, to think of what I *would* do 'when I came into my own'—*what* alterations I would make! Those rides in Oakover Wood were not a quarter wide enough; *they* would have to be seen to. The said wood, too, don't hold half the pheasants it ought. Only seventy we killed to-day; ought to have nobbled two hundred at least. We shot well, too, but the beggars '*weren't there*.' Foxes be hanged! When *I* come to the throne there'll have to be foxes and pheasants too, or Mr. Duckshot (the keeper) can take himself off. What a splendid tan gallop, too, one might have alongside the fir plantation! In fact, the improvements and alterations I made in my mind's eye are too numerous to mention. When I had done thinking of how I would alter things, my thoughts were wont to veer round as to what my aunt's income was. No! after pondering over it deeply and putting two and two together, I couldn't make it out a penny less than seven thousand a-year—not one penny! My aunt, thought I, can't last long either, with her habits. Lord, what a lot of champagne she drank at dinner last night! An old woman with such a short neck as she has got, and such a twist of her own, might go off with a pop any moment.

As I said before, on every previous visit to Cockaroost Court I had always been looked on with respect and awe by every one in the household. My aunt used to make a tremendous fuss always about me, and it was 'Ask Mr. John this,' and 'Ask Mr. John that,' before anything could be done; in fact, I should never have been surprised had my aunt taken it into her head to abdicate altogether and place me on the throne before the proper time. Never had the caresses showered on me been shared by pet of any kind. Except the dogs used for shooting purposes, and which never came near the house, the fat carriage-horses, and my aunt's own particular fat pony, that she drove herself in her little basket-carriage, there was not an animal about the place. No screaming parrot frightened you out of your life just when you were lifting to your lips your first cup of coffee at breakfast. There was no wheezy spaniel to get in your way perpetually, and throw you down. In fact, I had it all my own way. And now, when another Christmas had arrived, and,

as usual, I had made my annual appearance, looked forward to by the inmates at Cockaroost Court much in the same way as the clown in the pantomime is by the boys in the gallery on Boxing Night, alas! all was changed. Before I had been twenty-four hours in the house I discovered, to my disgust, that I was nobody—a mere nonentity. In fact, the whole house-

MY AUNT.

hold, including my indignant self, were under the thumb of my Aunt's Cat.

The brute (my aunt called it Tom Hodge, and it was a tabby as big as a young tiger), I believe, followed her home one fine day from a cottage in the village, whither she had been to pay a charitable visit to old Goody Brown, who had a bad leg. Poor old Goody being laid up, and consequently not being able to get about as usual, had most likely neglected the cat's meals for awhile; so that noble animal, liking the look of my aunt, and probably thinking she looked as if there was good living where she came from, just took French leave, as the saying is, of Goody Brown, who had brought him up (the ungrateful beast!) from a kitten, and followed Lady Jane home to Cockaroost Court.

This audacious cat, then, having arrived at Cockaroost Court, evidently liked his quarters; for, once there, it was very certain that no power on earth could drive him away. He made his first entry into the house through the scullery window, where he promptly fell foul of a plump hen-pheasant, just trussed ready for roasting, which had been left for a few moments whilst Sally, the scullery-maid, slipped out to interchange a little light banter with Tom Trotter, the postman. By the time the cat had got through a wing, a leg, and most of the breast, Sally returned, and the cat was duly hustled out best pace. Thence it fled to the kitchen, from which it had to flee at once; the cook, armed with a formidable rolling-pin, proving too many for him. Then it made for the housekeeper's room, where Mrs. Mulberry, the housekeeper, was busy putting out the preserved fruits, damson cheese, &c. for dessert that evening. Mrs. Mulberry, frightened out of her wits, promptly upset a dish of preserved ginger on the floor, and then shied the *London Journal* at puss, who once more had to bolt, this time to the butler's pantry. That worthy was just putting the finishing touches to an elaborate white tie when the cat entered. The indignant butler seized a bootjack and hurled it at the intruder, but with no more effect than smashing a dozen or so claret glasses, and in the confusion the cat disappeared no one knew where.

Dinner was served (my aunt happened to be alone). Soup came and disappeared. The fish arrived; a fine jack from the home pond, baked and stuffed. 'Gobble, gobble,' went my aunt. (It was a dish she was uncommonly fond of.) '*M-e-e-ow*' went something under the table.

'Good gracious, Thomson! what's that?' said my aunt.

'Why, it's that nasty cat, ma'am, again, I do believe,' answered the astonished butler.

'*That* nasty cat?' said my aunt. 'What do you mean? Pray explain, Thomson.' Thomson explained accordingly. 'What an odd thing! what a very extraordinary thing! and I dreamt of cats only last night! Dear me, very odd!' said my aunt. 'Give me a glass of Madeira, Thomson, and give the cat a plate of fish. It has evidently taken a fancy to me, poor thing! Poor puss! I must not be inhospitable really to you, especially as you've been so badly treated downstairs.'

From that time forth my aunt ceased to be mistress of her own house.

From the very moment of my arrival this horrible *protégé* of my aunt's seemed to take a dislike to me. The first morning at breakfast I happened to get up from the table for a moment to cut myself some bread from the home-made loaf on the sideboard.

'Oh, look, John! do look at that dear Tom!' suddenly exclaimed my aunt.

I turned round, and there beheld dear Tom seated on my chair, deliberately polishing off the devilled sole left on my plate. How pleased I was! There happened to be no more sole left,

MY AUNT'S CAT ON THE PROWL.

so I had to go without. That same afternoon General Blunderby and I sallied forth with our guns to beat the hedgerows and kill a few outlying pheasants and some rabbits. I proposed to begin by beating the belt round the park.

'Beg pardon, Mr. John,' said Duckshot, the keeper, 'but my lady won't have that touched on no account.'

'Why not?' said I.

'Well, sir, the fact is, the cat——'

'Oh, all right, Duckshot; I understand. You need not say any more.' And the General and I once more cursed the cat with all the expletives that came to hand.

'Talk of the devil!' said the General; 'look there, Johnnie!'

And, lo and behold, the object of our hatred suddenly appeared in the distance, carrying a fat rabbit in its mouth, making for the house in a leisurely manner.

That evening, on going up to my room to dress for dinner, the first thing to catch my eye was Tom Hodge, fast asleep on my bed, reposing on the snow-white front of my evening shirt, which had been duly laid out by the footman.

I drove the brute off, though not before he had bitten me half through my thumb. However, I paid him off this time, for, getting my hunting-whip, which lay handy, I administered heavy punishment before the beast could get away.

On Christmas Eve two new visitors arrived, in the shape of a Mrs. Tilbury Topper, a buxom widow of five-and-forty, and her son, Marmaduke, a most unpleasant young varmint of some ten summers. Now, Mrs. Tilbury Topper was a sort of distant cousin of Lady Jane's, and I could see with half an eye that she was horribly jealous of me and my authority at Cocka-roost Court: in fact, nothing would have pleased her better than to lower me in my aunt's esteem, and then for the youthful Marmaduke's name to be inserted in her ladyship's will *vice* myself, disgraced. Before Christmas Day was over I am not quite sure which I hated most, the cat or young Tilbury Topper. To see that boy and the cat eat turkey at luncheon that day was a caution. The General, who hated boys, gave him a cigar after lunch, which settled him for the time being; in fact, we were in hopes he would not come up to time for dinner: but his fond parent got him round somehow, and he and Tom Hodge turned up at the festive board hungrier than ever.

Two days after we commenced shooting the coverts. There were lots of pheasants, and ground game as well; so the old General, myself, and four other guns, were enabled to blaze away to our hearts' content, and by luncheon-time our bag was a good one, and we sat down to an admirable lunch as jolly a party as could be. Tom Hodge and Mrs. Tilbury Topper's cub were forgotten. It was altogether the merriest of meals. The General told his very fullest-flavoured stories, and we ate, and drank, and smoked, and chaffed, and laughed, until the woods rang again. At last we made a move, the General having suddenly discovered that we only had about two hours more of daylight.

Once more were the guns posted. Bang, bang, bang, rang out the shots in the clear frosty air. 'Hi! cock, cock!' shouted the beaters, rattling their sticks. The cry of '*Mark Woodcock!*' sets us all on the *qui vive*, for woodcocks are scarce in these parts. The General misses with both barrels, and I see that old warrior, who, I rather think, drank a little too much brown sherry at lunch, stamp his foot on the ground with vexation. Hooray! the woodcock's coming to me. He doesn't see me until he is quite close, and then shoots off at a tangent. Bang! goes my gun. Down he comes, and I've won all the fellows' half-crowns, for we had a sweep for him at luncheon. Patter, patter, patter, a whole army of hares and rabbits come tittuping up over the dead leaves. Over roll a couple of bunnies, right and left.

And now, what's this coming up? A dog with a bell on. One of the keeper's terriers, I suppose, got loose. See, he makes a dart at a rabbit. What! by Jove, can I believe my eyes? No, it can't be!—yes, it is! By the living Jingo it's my Aunt's Cat!

Now, whether it was the curious brown sherry I consumed at lunch, or that extra glass of curaçoa, I know not. I rather think it must have been the curaçoa. But true it is, I felt at that identical moment up to anything, from pitch-and-toss to manslaughter.

Thomas Hodge! Thomas Hodge! As a cat of the world you should *not* have come across me at that identical moment. The brute just before he got to the ride made a playful rush at a banging great hare. Over went the hare with my first barrel, and then for the first time the wretched cat caught sight of me. He made a dart across the ride, but my gun was up. I pulled the trigger. Just behind the shoulder the charge of No. 5 caught him, and over and over he rolled as dead as a herring.

Up came the other guns and the keepers.

'What! You don't mean to say you've been and gone and shot Lady Jane's cat?' shouted the General.

'O Lord! here's a lark! Sherry all round, my boys, to celebrate the event, at once.'

'Lady Jane marnt know of this here, Mister John,' said Duckshot, gravely, as he stirred the corpse of Tom Hodge with

By the living Jingo!
Its my Aunts
Pat!

his stick. 'I'd best bury 'im straightaway.' Which accordingly was done, and at the same time I endowed each of the under-keepers with half-a-crown, strictly enjoining them to say nothing about it.

* * * * *

'What an odd thing! what an *extremely* curious thing, that Sir Thomas Hodge does not honour us with his presence to-night!' observed my aunt, as the fish was being cleared away at dinner-time that evening.

'Very curious, indeed,' assented the General, swallowing his sherry at a gulp, and winking at me over the top of the glass.

A smile stole over the butler's solemn face (he hated Hodge), and the footman was obliged to leave the room abruptly to avoid breaking out into a guffaw. They all knew it. As for myself, I, the wretched culprit, as the penny-a-liners would say, hid my guilty features in a glass of champagne.

Well, we finished our dinner, and dessert arrived in due course, and with the dessert appeared Master Tilbury Topper, with a clean face and his best black velvet knickerbocker suit on.

'I'll have some figs first, and then some preserved ginger, and then an orange,' said he, all in a breath, in answer to a kind inquiry on my part as to what he would have.

'Your friend, Tom Hodge, isn't here, Marmy dear, to-night, to keep you company,' said my aunt, addressing the urchin. 'Aren't you sorry? We are all wondering where he can be.'

'I know where he is! I do!' said the horrid boy, cramming his mouth with a fig, and wriggling about in his chair.

'And where is he, Marmy love? Tell your mother,' said Mrs. Tilbury Topper, giving the cub a maternal kiss, and putting a whole pile of preserved ginger on his plate.

'Noo, I won't,' whined the boy. 'Parker told me I wasn't to—and I won't.'

'Ah, but you'll tell Aunt Jane, darling: won't you, my pet?' said my aunt insinuatingly, now all impatient.

'Yes, I'll tell *you*,' said the little brute. 'Cousin John shot him, he did, with his gun, and buried him in the wood, and Ned,

the keeper, told Parker, and I heard him, and Parker told me not to tell; but I hate Parker, and I *will* tell! And you know you did, Cousin John.' And here the little wretch began to blubber, and my aunt went into hysterics.

Mrs. Tilbury Topper flashed a glance of triumph towards me across the table, and I was ready to sink into my shoes with confusion. What a commotion there was, to be sure!

'I tell you what it is, my boy. You and I shall have notice to quit in the morning—you see if we don't,' said the General, shaking his head solemnly when we were left alone together. 'I shall tell my servant to pack up to-night on spec.'

The General was right. Early next morning came a polite note from Mrs. Topper, saying that Lady Jane had deputed her (being too ill to write herself) to tell me that she would be glad if I would bring my visit to a close that day, as she was so upset by the dreadful murder of her poor cat that she really could not meet me with any degree of satisfaction—at all events, for some time to come. So the General and I breakfasted together (he had received a similar missive), and soon after we drove off in my aunt's carriage, drawn by the fat horses, and journeyed up to town by the express train.

Six months afterwards, as I was sitting over a late breakfast one fine Monday morning in my snug rooms in the Albany, a telegram was brought me. It ran thus:—

From	*To*
Mrs. Tilbury Topper,	*John Rattlepate, Esq.*
Cockaroost Court.	*Albany, Piccadilly.*

Your Aunt, Lady Jane Doldrum, no more. Funeral Thursday.

Here's a pretty go! thought I; and I've never seen my aunt since I shot that confounded Tom cat of hers! Hope she hasn't cut me out of her will! Shouldn't think though she would be so cruel as that; too bad of her if she has. Ruminating thus, I lit a cigar, and took myself off to my tailor's to order some mourning garments.

* * * * *

The funeral is over—so is luncheon, during which meal Mrs.

Tilbury Topper took the opportunity of informing the assembled company that the lamented lady never recovered, ne-e-ver recovered—(here she made play with her handkerchief, and looked hard at me)—the death of her favourite cat.

THE READING OF THE WILL.

'*All bosh*, my dear sir, *all bosh*,' whispered the family doctor—who sat next to me—in my ear. 'It wasn't the cat a bit, it was *pâté de foie gras* settled the poor old lady—full habit, short neck, stout, ate and drank like a tiger all her life. Told her not—*would* do it. Pop goes the weasel! *What?*' and the little doctor, who was of a cheerful disposition, swigged off a glass of champagne with great gusto, and immediately afterwards tried to look preternaturally solemn.

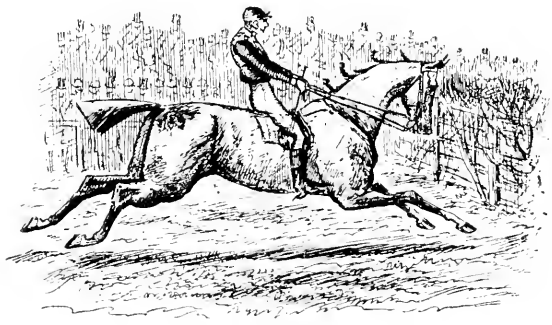
We are all assembled in the drawing-room. Mrs. Tilbury Topper, Master Tilbury Topper, the doctor, the lawyer, and myself. The lawyer undoes his papers. I am anxious. Mrs. Tilbury Topper does not turn a hair—on the contrary, she has a look of confidence about her that betokens mischief. I don't at all like the look of things. The lawyer clears his throat, and proceeds to business. It is all over, vulgarly speaking, in a

brace of shakes. With the exception of a few legacies to the servants, the deceased lady has left the whole of her property, Cockaroost Court, plate, money, fat horses, in short, everything, in trust to her beloved nephew, Marmaduke Ethelred Tilbury Topper; to her other nephew, John Reginald Rattlepate, she has left the sum of one hundred pounds, free of duty: 'in addition to which,' said the lawyer, 'the lamented lady, when I drew up her will, shortly before she died, bade me tell you—now be calm, my dear sir; pray be calm (for, like Mr. Benjamin Stout in Bulwer Lytton's play, I jumped up in a rage), *pray*, understand that what I say is entirely without prejudice—the deceased lady, then, bade me tell you, as coming from her, that you never did a worse day's work in all your life than when you shot "your Aunt's Cat."'

PEASANT *v.* PHEASANT.

THE SCOTCH KEEPER.

A Recollection of the Grand National Steeplechase.



THE FAVOURITE.

THE near approach of the twelfth of August naturally sets one thinking of that sporting bird so pleasant to shoot and eat — the Grouse; and, of course, thinking of grouse, naturally again sets one thinking of the party that looks after him, viz., the gamekeeper; and thinking of the gamekeeper recalls to my mind how once upon a time I ran across a specimen of the class under rather funny circumstances, and in about the very last place in the world I should have expected to meet him.

I arrived at Liverpool one fine March afternoon, and having driven to the Adelphi Hotel, where I had taken rooms for the Grand National week, inquired for the friend who was to join me. I found he had not arrived; so, to while away the time until he turned up, I strolled off to the smoking-room to indulge in a quiet cigar.

'Anybody in the smoking-room?' I inquired of the waiter, whom I encountered in the passage leading thereto.

'Honly a Scotch genelman, Sir; bin there by hisself all the arternoon, Sir. The gents haint arrived from Lincoln, Sir, yet Sir, so there haint naterally no one about, you see,' said the waiter apologetically.

'A Scotch gentleman, eh! How do you know he's a Scotch gentleman?' I asked.

'Well,' replied the waiter, with an air of authority, 'I *know* he's Scotch, Sir, by his langwich; and he's evidently a genelman, Sir, for he's bin a drinkin' shampain and sherry, sherry and shampain, like one o'clock, he has, the 'ole of the blessed day.'

After that there was nothing more to be said, so asking no more questions, in I went to have a look at the gentleman from Scotland. There he was, sure enough—a great raw-boned, brown-bearded Scotchman, attired in a tweed shooting-jacket of a plaid pattern, and a Glengarry bonnet. He was reclining gracefully in an arm-chair, with his long, serviceable-looking legs on another. A large glass of brown sherry stood on the table beside him, whilst a very small and very black clay pipe was held gracefully between his great brown finger and thumb: in fact, the stranger from over the Border looked uncommonly comfortable, and as one who had evidently made himself quite at home. Now I rather pride myself on being a judge of character, and I immediately put him down for a Highland gamekeeper if ever I saw one, and it quickly turned out that I was perfectly right in my guess. I had not been two minutes in the room before the stranger opened the conversation, and in a very short space of time we were, as the saying is, as thick as thieves. In fact, barring a sporting bagman I once ran against at a fishing-inn in Derbyshire, I don't think I ever came across such an affable gent. The Scotchman very soon told me how it was he came to be there. His master, it appeared, owned all or part of a horse running in the Grand National, and he had brought his faithful henchman with him all the way to Liverpool to see the redoubtable nag win. Not only that, his own confidence in his favourite's prowess had so inspired the servant that that worthy had forgotten his Scotch caution (at least, he said he had) so far as to invest what he called a 'conseederable portion of his savings' on the noble animal in question. Well, in course of time, my friend arrived, so, bidding adieu to the communicative Scot, I adjourned with my companion to the coffee-room to partake of the very excellent dinner one is always sure of at the Adelphi. That over, we amused ourselves with a stroll in the town, and then returned to the hotel to smoke a cigar. The smoking-room was full when we got there, and the whole and undivided

attention of the occupants of the room seemed concentrated on the conversation that was taking place between two individuals —one of the pair being none other than my friend the Scotch

A SKETCH OUTSIDE THE ADELPHI HOTEL.

keeper, the other a Volunteer officer in full uniform, who was leaning against the mantlepiece very particularly drunk. Grouse-

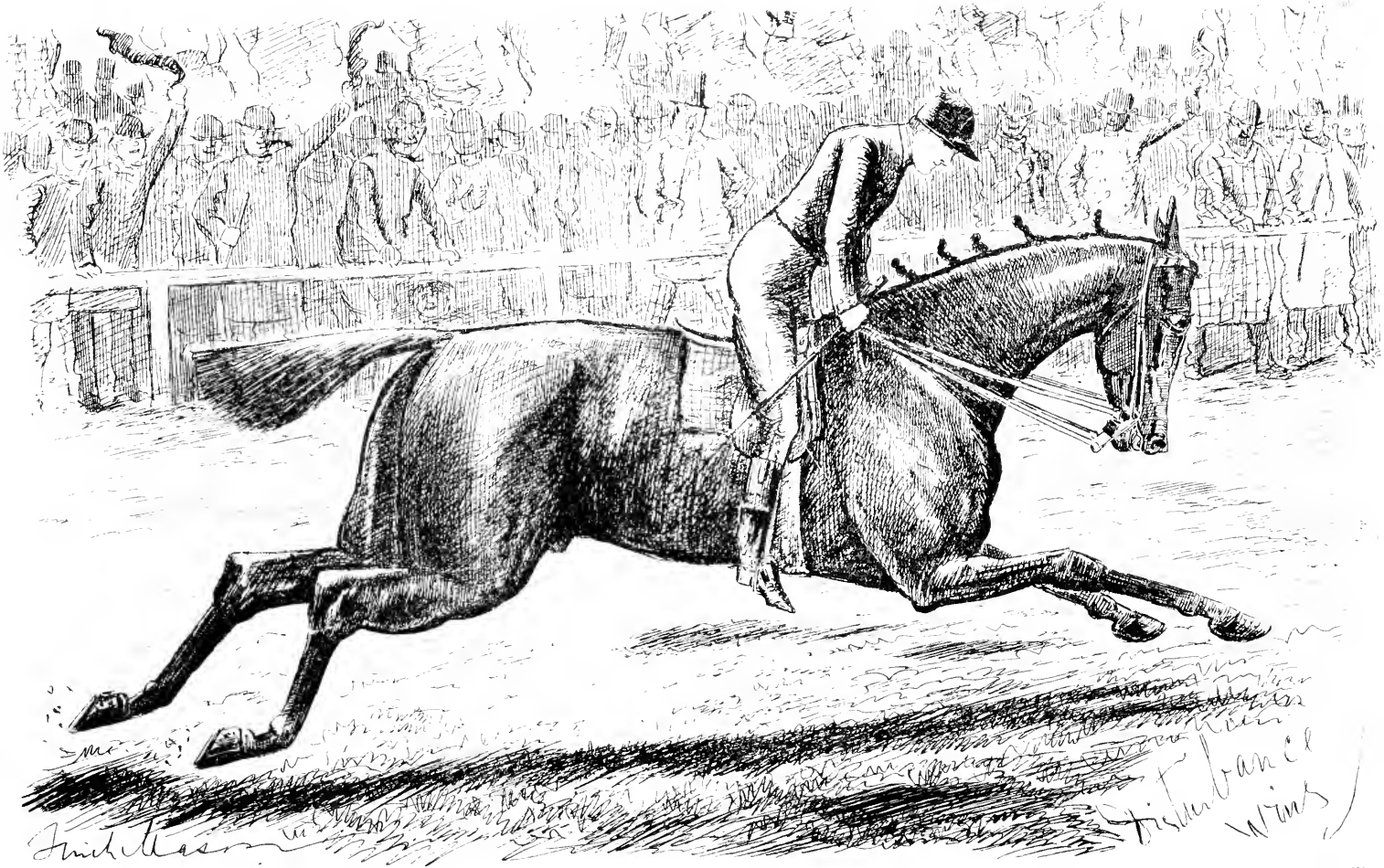
shooting was the theme of their conversation. The Liverpudlian, when we entered the room, was boasting in a decidedly arrogant manner of his prowess with the gun; not only that—if one was to believe him—he was in the habit of visiting, in the course of the shooting season, all the biggest swells in Scotland, from the Duke of Sutherland downwards. This latter assertion the keeper took upon himself to declare that he did not believe —no, not a word of it. 'No, my mannie,' said he, to the great amusement of the company, 'I dinna believe a word of it, not if ye were to talk from noo till to-morrer mornin'.' To which bold assertion the Volunteer captain replied with a drunken hiccup, amidst a roar of laughter from the whole room, that he—the keeper—was nothing better, in his opinion, than a dashed vulgar Scotchman, and he wished to have no more to say to him. Having thus delivered himself with much dignity, he swigged off his brandy and soda at a gulp, lit with much difficulty a fresh cigar, and glared defiantly round with the air of a victorious game cock. A silence ensued. Was the Scotchman defeated?—the whole room was in anxiety on that point. Not a bit of it. Our keeper pulled himself together.

'Before ye goo to bed,' said he, with an air of drunken gravity sublimely ridiculous, 'Before ye goo to bed, I should like, my mannie, to pit to you a question that has joost occurred to me to pit. We'll joost imagine for the fun o' the thing (for it is reely most amusin' to heer you say sae) that you and your humble sairvent to command are out on the moors tigither—sae one o' the Deuk o' Sutherland's moors (ye tell me you veesit 'im occasionly)—well, I'm *here*, we'll say, you's *there*, and the dogs is rangin' in front of us. Well, a pack o' groose gets up, and you fires. Well, noo, arm joost thinkin',' said the keeper, putting on an air of supernatural gravity, 'arm joost thinkin', my mannie, I wonder which ye'd be shootin', *me or the dogs!*'

A shout of laughter shook the whole room, in the midst of which the Volunteer officer fairly bolted.

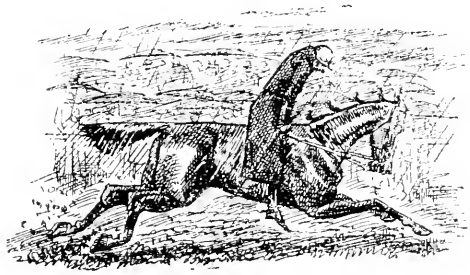
* * * * *

Popping my head out of my bedroom window the next morning to see what sort of a day it was, the first thing that attracted my attention was my Scotch friend of the day before, as fresh as paint, and apparently not feeling any ill effect from



see page 87

his overnight debauch, having his boots blacked by one of the Shoeblack Brigade, on the pavement in front of the hotel, the while he calmly smoked his morning pipe. I saw him no more. Disturbance and Mr. Richardson won the Grand National between them, so the speculative Highlander had to return to his native land a sadder and 'nae doot'—as he himself would say—a wiser man.



A NICE DAY FOR STEEPLECHASING

JOHN JELLYBY'S WOOD.

MR. JAMES JESSAMY.

WHEN our four-footed friend, the dog — more particularly the sporting dog—twitches his paws and gives little short barks in his sleep, he is generally supposed to be dreaming of the chase in some form or other. Indeed, I have heard sportsmen go the length of saying that a thoroughly well-bred dog —a real country gentleman of a dog—would not be capable of dreaming of anything else, not even his dinner. If such is the case, I most certainly ought to have been born a bow-wow myself, for whenever I *do* dream (which is not seldom) my nightmare invariably takes the form of some incident connected with sports of the field. You never find me, for instance, like the young party in the *Bohemian Girl*, dreaming that I dwelt in marble halls, with vassals and serfs at my si-hi-hide. Nor

have I ever quite succeeded, as a certain noble sportsman* did some years ago, in dreaming the winner of the City and Suburban at 50 to 1 overnight, and, what was cleverer still, backing him next day at that extremely comfortable price. Early then, one dark, damp morning this last November that ever was, I was tossing about in the full enjoyment of what I may call my favourite nightmare. I was out shooting. An enormous woodcock had, as usual, risen in front of me in covert. My gun was up—but, no! pull the trigger as hard as I please, the weapon would *not* go off. I take two fingers to it. The phantom woodcock is gradually fading away from my sight. One more pull in despair! Both barrels go off simultaneously with a terrific noise, and I am knocked backwards with the recoil. There is a wild yell from some one. I've done for somebody this time to a moral certainty, and I wake up reeking with perspiration, considerably eased in my mind on discovering that the cry I heard was not that of a wounded sportsman, but only an extra loud 'yodelling' on the part of that early bird the milkman.

I was now thoroughly roused, and

'As I laye a thynkynge, a thynkynge, a thynkynge,'

as Thomas Ingoldsby has it, stretched on my back, with my arms folded comfortably under my head, it suddenly occurred to me, 'I wonder I have not received before now my annual letter from dear old John Jellyby, telling me he is going to shoot his wood, and asking me to make one of the party.' It was odd, as it chanced, that I should have thought of it on that particular morning, for half an hour afterwards, on my servant appearing with my shaving-water and my letters, the very first missive I opened proved to be the identical one I had been thinking about. It ran thus:—

'*Fallowfield Lodge*,
'*November* —, 1882.

'DEAR CECIL,—We are going to shoot "the wood" to-morrow week, and you must make one of the gunners as usual. The leaf is well off, and the pheasants have done uncommonly well, so I hope you will be able to blaze away to your heart's content.

'Yours always, JOHN JELLYBY.'

My dear old friend, John Jellyby, is the proud possessor of a

* Lord Vivian.

snug little estate of some seven hundred acres, situated in what the glib-tongued auctioneers are pleased to term 'the favourite county of Hertford;' and on this estate, if you were to carefully examine the Ordnance Map, you would find that, covering about forty acres of the said estate, is 'a wood,' the said wood being described on the map as Scrub Wood. It is known by the natives and the master of the hounds as 'Jellyby's Wood,' and by the worthy proprietor himself as *the* wood. *The* wood (let us call it by its most dignified name) is a perfect treasure to its owner. In fact, I really don't know what he'd do without it. In the spring he finds himself admiring its beauties in the shape of primroses and violets, to say nothing of pheasants' nests. In the summer he and his belongings take their pleasure out of it to any extent in the way of picnics, &c. I need scarcely say Sunday would not be Sunday without a stroll in 'the wood' after luncheon by the full strength of the company. Autumn comes round: the young pheasants that Jellyby has bred grow big, and are duly transferred from their coops in the patch of gorse in the park to 'the wood,' and from that moment until the first big shoot in November John Jellyby is kept in a continual state of excitement. To say nothing of the pheasants, John has his little anxieties concerning the litter of foxes that are always reared every year in a snug dell in its midst, for Jellyby, though no fox-hunter in the strict sense of the word—that is to say, he does not actually ride to hounds—is an ardent admirer of the sport; indeed, often comes out and looks at them with a benevolent smile on his rosy face from the broad back of his pony, and is one of those sportsmen, getting rather few and far between, I fear, who believe in having not only pheasants, but foxes, too—in fact, *will* have them, or he'll know the reason why.

The arrangement between John and the M. F. H. is, that the hounds are not to come until his first shoot has come off, after which he and his hounds are welcome as the flowers in May, as often as they please. I often think how it would make some of our great landed proprietors—who go in for one week's big slaughter, and then shut up for the rest of the season, for the very good reason that there is nothing left to shoot—stare, did they only know the amount of fun John Jellyby gets in the course of the winter out of his one little covert.

To begin with, directly the leaf is well off he has his first

shoot—his big shoot, as he calls it—and for which I am proud to say he always asks me. Then about Christmas-time he has his second day, which is pretty much the same as the first, with the exception that he has his rabbits ferreted and their holes stopped beforehand, and spares his hen pheasants. After that event the unfortunate Scrub Wood has an uneasy time of it until the end of the season. One day John with a neighbour, perhaps two, will beat the hedgerows in the morning, and have what he calls a turn at the wood in the afternoon; or he and his boy Jack, home from Eton (a chip of the old block, you may depend), start ferreting rabbits in its midst.

Another day John will take it into his sporting old head that there's very likely to be a woodcock in the wood. *What?* Nothing easier than to go and look for him. In short, what with John and his myrmidons, and the hounds and their followers, not to mention the nocturnal visits of little Jemmy, *the* poacher *par excellence* of those parts, I should say that not a covert in England has such a rough time of it from October until February as John Jellyby's wood.

Please to imagine me, then, one fine frosty evening, landed safely, gun-case and all, in the Jellyby waggonette at the Jellyby mansion. John himself, with a spud in his hand, and his pet retriever at his heels, and, as usual before one of his shoots, in a suppressed state of excitement, is standing at the hall door, and receives me with open arms as I drive up. 'So glad you were able to come, old fellow,' says he, shaking my hand nearly off. 'This frosty weather will suit us down to the ground to-morrow, and we shall have, I *think*—I say I *think*,' said John, guardedly, 'the very best day we've ever had in the wood.' And, rubbing his hands with glee at the prospect, my excited host ushered me, without more ado, into the library, in which snug apartment, looking more cosy than usual after the cold railway journey, I find Mrs. Jellyby and her fair daughters, who receive me with a warmth only excelled by that of the cup of tea pressed upon me.

At dinner that evening there were only ourselves, and conversation was carried on almost entirely by the daughters of the house and myself, and turned principally to what the theatres were doing; what Corney Grain's last musical sketch was like, &c. &c., for the Misses Jellyby were lively-dispositioned young

ladies, and uncommonly fond of running up to town—for a lark, as their father said. The ladies gone, a little table is drawn up between us in front of the fire; John Jellyby takes his first gulp of claret, giving a smack of satisfaction with his lips as he puts his glass down—an act, I am bound to say, he is perfectly justified in, for the Léoville is irreproachable—and then *the* one subject occupying the Jellyby mind is brought upon the *tapis*, and 'the wood,' and nothing but 'the wood,' is talked. Past days in the wood in which I have participated are discussed with the first bottle, future field-days, with the second—in fact, were I not so fond of dear old John, I am afraid I should have been slightly bored; as it was, I quite entered into the spirit of the thing.

The next morning turned out beautifully fine. 'What a day for "the wood," ain't it, my boy?' exclaimed John, with his mouth full of ham, as I appeared in the breakfast-room somewhat late. 'The girls 'll look after you,' said he, a moment later, swallowing his coffee at a gulp, and chucking his napkin away. 'I must be off and see about things.'

And away he bustled out of the room. Soon was heard the rattle of dogcarts and rings at the front-door bell, denoting the arrival of the other gunners. As they were the same this time as nearly every other year I had shot with Jellyby, I felt more like one of the family than ever. First comes old Potter of Cockaroost Park, and Squire Potter, as the natives call him, is a terrific beak, as a stranger quickly finds out before he has been in his company five minutes. His sole conversation is, I may say, 'beakery' to a degree, breathing as it does of nothing else but quarter sessions, poor laws, boards of guardians, &c. The squire forthwith button-holes me, and proceeds to pour into my unwilling ear a long account of how he had a grand dispute on the bench, only yesterday, with 'that fellow' Holloway. 'You've met Holloway here before, I think,' says he, 'and you can't think, Sir, what an obstinate, pig-headed ass that man can be when he likes. Why, Sir ——'

'Major 'Ollerway,' announces the butler, throwing wide open the door at that moment, to my great relief and the confusion of the worthy magistrate.

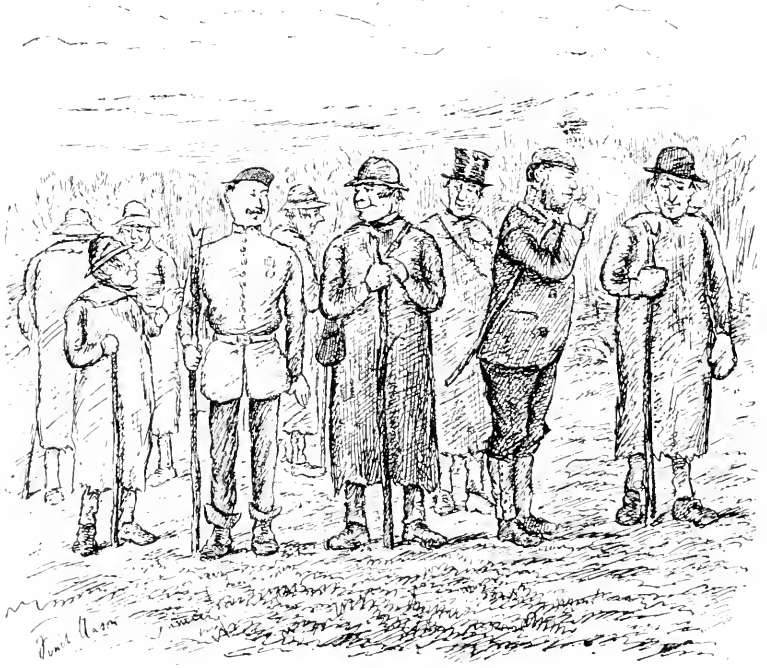
The Major, who I have met before, is a mighty shooter, almost too keen indeed; for he, besides being an uncommonly good shot, is an excessively jealous one, and is very apt, especially

if his next-door neighbour in a ride is not a good performer, to take his birds as well as his own. He always brings an old retainer of his, named John, along with him on special occasions, the said John always making a point of notching on a stick his master's score for the day. The story goes, that on one occasion, when the Major, accompanied as usual by John, was shooting with a certain Joe Wagley, who was always full of his fun, Joe and his friends made a dead set at the Major at luncheon, the consequence of which was that the worthy officer imbibed considerably more than was good for him, and shot in the wildest possible manner for the rest of the day. Old John, too, was plied with sherry on the sly until he was as bad as his master. The end of it was, that when at the close of the day that worthy servitor added up his master's score as usual, he made out amidst the uproarious applause of the company, that the Major had killed about fifty more pheasants than had been actually slain by the whole party.

The butler next announced Mr. James Jessamy of New Barns, Jellyby's next-door neighbour, who was undoubtedly the real thing in sportsmen, if dressing the part went for anything, for such a swell I don't think it was ever my lot to meet before, or since, out shooting. James, or Jemmy as he was nearly always called, was what the ladies would call a 'pretty' little man of about forty or so. To begin with his head. His curly well-oiled locks, were covered with a green Tyrolese hat, in the band of which was stuck a scarlet feather, once the property of his wife's parrot. Round his neck, in strong contrast to the pink-striped shirt beneath, came a blue tie, with huge white spots, tied in a bow with flowing ends. A many-pocketed brown velvet coat and waistcoat covered his little squat figure.

He sported white cord trowsers, over which again came a pair of bright yellow gaiters reaching to the thigh, after the fashion of a gamekeeper. His boots, though thick, were patent leather, and shone again with varnish. On his hands he wore a pair of dirty lavender kid gloves. Sixteenthly, and lastly, as the parson said, one was aware on talking to him of a strong odour hovering about as of full-flavoured cigars, brandy and soda, and jockey-club bouquet. Add to this the fact that he is a shocking bad shot, and you have a pretty accurate portrait of Mr. Jemmy Jessamy.

The advent of a plump old gentleman of the name of Bulger and a nephew of his from town made our party complete. The nephew, I may mention, did not shoot, but only came out to see the fun. He was a vacuous-looking youth, wore kid gloves, sported a crutch-handled stick, smoked innumerable cigarettes, and in the course of the day asked every one if they had seen the last burlesque at the Gaiety. As everybody said 'No,' the conversation, as far as he was concerned, was limited. We were



THE BEATERS.

wicked enough in the course of the day to point him out to old Potter as an undoubted specimen of the *genus* 'Masher.' Potter, who had heard of such beings, was charmed. 'You *don't* say so!' exclaimed he, fixing him with his magisterial eye, and gazing at him as if he were a wild beast. 'So that's a masher, is it? Ha, hum, dear *me!*' And the worthy beak took every one aside in the course of the day with, 'I say, you see that fellow Bulger's got with him? Well, they tell me he's a masher!'

Liqueurs partaken of, and cigars lit, we all made a start for 'the wood,' where we found awaiting us a perfect army of beaters, composed of the labourers on the estate, assisted by the odd men

of the village, consisting of the policeman (in mufti, of course), a soldier home on furlough, the postman, &c. We are soon hard at it. The shots ring out cheerily in the bright, crisp morning. 'Heer (hare) to the reet, rabbut to the left,' cry the beaters, rattling their sticks. 'Woodcock! mark woodcock! Where is he?' It's no woodcock after all, but only old Johnny Timson, who, being old and blind, takes every '*blargbud*' he sees for one, as an indignant beater tells me. There is plenty to shoot at, and John Jellyby is in the seventh heaven of delight, and by luncheon-time we have made quite an imposing bag.

Everybody is cheerful except Potter, who declares 'that fellow' Holloway has been taking his pheasants all the morning. 'Confounded old muff!' says the Major, on John remonstrating. 'If wiping his eye about a dozen times means taking his birds, I plead guilty, old fellow; but nothing else, 'pon my honour.' Jovial indeed is the luncheon, Jemmy Jessamy coming out with some reminiscences that even old Potter condescends to laugh at; and by the time the curaçoa has been twice round the lot of us feel fit for anything. At it we go again. 'Cuss the thing! I never *can* shoot after lunch,' says old Potter, stamping his foot with vexation, as he misses an easy shot at a cock pheasant with both barrels. 'Nor before either,' mutters Jemmy Jessamy, promptly wiping the magistrate's eye. The Major artfully puts himself next to plump old Bulger in the ride, and deliberately takes all his birds one after another for the rest of the day, poor Bulger being apparently too stupid to discover the fact. Perhaps, too, he thought he had killed them himself, as he generally managed to loose off his gun as the birds were in the act of falling to Holloway's unerring aim. 'I don't remember to have shot better than I have to-day for years,' said the old gentleman, as he waddled up to me at the close of the day. Now, oddly enough, the only thing I had seen the mighty Bulger shoot all day was a hare. It happened thus. During one of the beats I had turned out of the ride a little into the interior of the wood. Soon after I had done so I was suddenly aware of old Bulger stumping down the path. Now, in the middle of it lay a dead hare—one, indeed, that I had shot. No sooner did the worthy sportsman see it than he pulled up short, and first looking carefully round to see that no one saw him, he blazed both barrels into the body of the defunct hare.

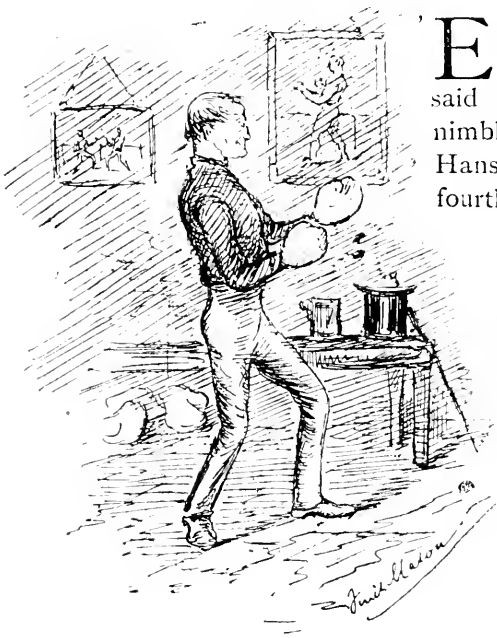
SEE PUNCH

He then walked away as if nothing had happened, and I laughed until the tears ran down my cheeks. Still more so when I heard dear old Bulger soon after call out, in a pompous voice, 'Beater, there's a hare to pick up in the ride back there.'

Well, everything must have an ending, so our day came to an end at last. A hundred pheasants, as many rabbits, fifty hares, two woodcocks, and a wood pigeon, is the bag, and quite enough too. Major Holloway's faithful John, who, as usual, is a trifle obfuscated, makes out by the notches on his stick that his master has killed to his own gun nearly all the ground game, and *all* the pheasants but two. But that won't do, John; so be off, you old sinner! 'And we ought to have killed *at least* fifty more pheasants, old feller,' says John Jellyby, taking my arm as we march home; 'but still, for all that, you and I have had worse days than to-day in "the wood,"—haven't we?'

'MARK! WOODCOCK!!'

A QUIET MORNING WITH PROFESSOR MAULEY.



PROFESSOR MAULEY.

'ERE comes the coppers, so I'm horf,' said a cabman, jumping nimbly on to the box of his Hansom, at the end of a fourth round of a single combat with a dilapidated gentleman in evening dress. 'And I tell yer wot, guvner, I should like to amoose myself, I should, with arf-a-dozen or so o' bloomin' swells, who couldn't fight no better nor you can, hevery mornin' afore breakfast: blow me if I shouldn't! Ah! 'ere they come! Tar, tar. Come up, oss!' And with an impudent flick of his whip the victorious cabman whirled rapidly away, just as his natural enemy the policeman, or 'copper,' as he called him, arrived on the scene of action.

The dilapidated swell, reader, was no other than myself. Myself, who had been dining, not wisely but too well, and who, in a moment of weakness after a dispute concerning the fare, had offered to settle the matter by ordeal of battle. Myself, who had been ignominiously floored four times in as many minutes. Myself, who now staggered into my rooms in the Albany, the possessor of two of the very blackest of black eyes; a nose

naturally large, swollen twice its natural size; and a decidedly loose front tooth. Myself, bound under an engagement on the morrow to take the object of my affections, the only girl I ever loved, to Ascot!

* * * * * *

One sunshiny morning in June, about a fortnight after the above occurrence, I found myself at the door of a dingy-looking house in a dingy street, leading out of a dingy square, situated not a very great distance from that great thoroughfare, well-beloved of shop-going ladies, mustachioed foreigners, and loungers generally, and named after the first gentleman in Europe; to wit, Regent Street. A brass plate at the side of the door, which was wide open, announced that within was to be found, between the hours of eleven and four o'clock, Professor Mauley; and in order to lure the said Professor from his lair, the visitor was politely requested by the brass plate to ring the second bell on the left-hand side.

Obeying the brass plate's instructions to the letter, I set a tinkling little bell going, with the result that a slip-shod and very grimy young lady made her appearance from the regions down below, who, on learning my business, requested me to 'knock at the door at the end o' the passidge,' and I should find the learned gentleman I was in search of, who was just 'a 'avin' of his lunch.'

Stumbling along a dark and dirty passage, I at last reached the door of the Professor's studio, and my knock speedily produced the Professor himself.

Before I go any further I may as well state that Professor Mauley was a well-known exponent of the noble art of self-defence, to whom I had been recommended by my various friends to study under for a time, so that, in case I should ever again be called upon to use nature's weapons in defence of my person, or as a means of punishment on the aggressive snob, I should be enabled to do so with safety to myself and damage to my opponent.

'Go to Mauley as soon as you get fit,' said my volatile friend, Tommy Tozer, one fine morning, soon after my encounter with the cabman, as he sat, smoking a cigar, on the edge of my bed, and admiring my black eyes. 'Go to Mauley, and after a few

turns with him with the gloves, you'll be able to knock any cabby or snob, who gives you any of his cussed cheek, into the middle of next week, my bonny boy.'

So to Mauley accordingly I went, and very much astonished I was when that gentleman made his appearance.

Instead of the truculent-looking, beetle-browed, and bull-necked gladiator I expected to see, lo and behold! I was received with a bow the great Lord Chesterfield himself might have envied, by a dapper little elderly man, with nothing of the prize-fighter about him except a scarcity of teeth, which his age might fairly have accounted for, and a slightly flattened nose. 'Walk in, Sir; pray walk in,' said the affable Professor. 'Friend of Mr. Tozer's, Sir? Know him well, Sir—*nice* gentleman, Sir—capital boxer, Sir—proud to number amongst my pooples any friend of Mr. Tozer's, Sir.'

Professor Mauley's *atelier* was a large, low-ceilinged room. Sundry prints and smoke-dried pictures of bygone heroes of the P. R. adorned the walls, whilst all round the apartment, piled one a-top of the other, were a series of boxes, with the cards of their owners nailed to them, and containing the sparring paraphernalia, such as gloves, shoes, and flannels, of the Professor's numerous 'pooples,' as he called them. 'Ah! there's some nice gentlemen there, Sir. Some capital boxers, Sir—dessay you know some of 'em, Sir,' observed the Professor, seeing me examining some of the cards. 'That top box belongs to the Dook o' Syllabub. Comes here for a hour, hevery mornin' doorin' the season, the Dook does. Spars capital, and *seeh* a one for 'ard work, too, he is! Thinks nothin' of hittin' out fifteen 'underd with the dumb bells without stopping. When he's tired, he jest takes some port wine and fresh heggs beat up together, and goes on again, 'arder than ever.

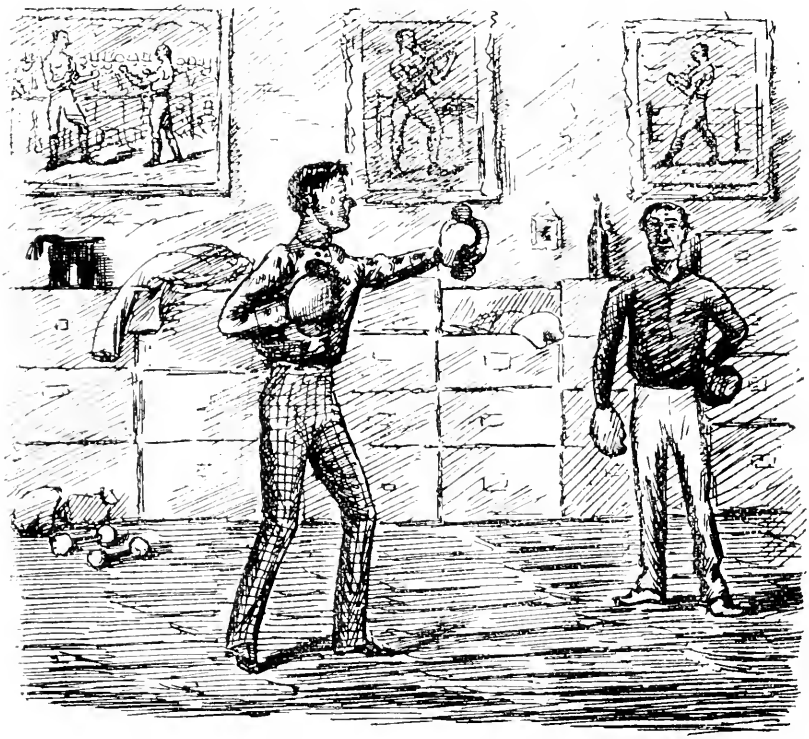
'And now, Sir, if you don't mind putting another poople's gloves on until you've got your own—Mr. Topper's, Sir—Stock Exchange gentleman, Sir—*nice* gentleman, Sir—we'll do a little work, Sir.'

Accordingly, for ten minutes or so, the Professor and I went dancing about after one another, round and round the room, until I was fairly bathed in perspiration, whilst he, apparently, had not turned a hair. I should now have liked to have sat

down, but the inexorable Professor, putting a brace of dumb-bells in my gloved hands, bid me stand opposite him and hit out a hundred straight from the shoulder. Heavens! how glad I was when he counted the last one!

'Thank goodness, *that's* over!' I ejaculated, throwing myself into the nearest chair.

'Ah! a little work every mornin' will soon get you fit, Sir,'



A TURN AT THE DUMB-BELLS.

observed my Mentor, with a grin, stepping 'corkily' about the room as he spoke, as if to show off his freshness against my want of condition. 'You box capital, Sir. All you want is a little work. Ah! that was a *gentleman*, Sir, if you like—not many like *'im*, now-a-days, Sir,' said he, following my eye as it rested on a print on his walls, entitled 'Slender Billy's Studio.' 'That's the celebrated Captin Buff, Sir, and that picter was took in the Queen's Bench Prison, Sir, where the Captin was confined for assaulting of a policeman. Lor' bless me! it seems only

yesterday as I see the Captin a-fightin' the crossin'-sweeper at Jem Burns' for a fi-pun note.'

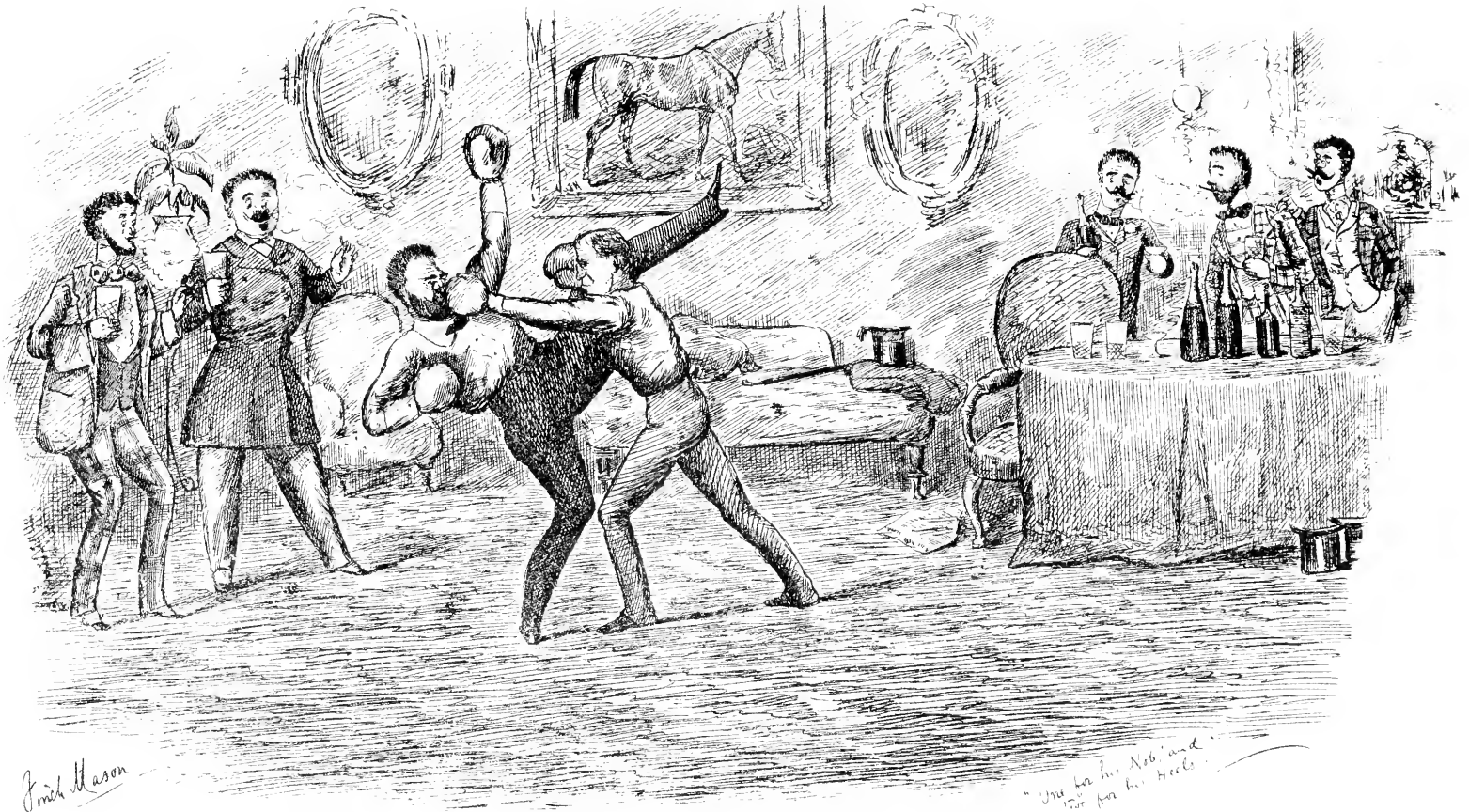
'What did he fight him for, Sir? Why, it was this way, Sir. The Captin was a-walkin' down St. James's Street one evenin', dressed as spicy as could be—black coat, white tie, etcetrer, a-going to dine at his club, Sir. Well, just as he was a-crossin' the street, the sweeper he gives a flick of his broom and sends a great dollop of mud all over the Captin's shiny boots. "What the blazes do you mean by that?" ses the Captin, in a rage: "dashed if I wouldn't give you a jolly good 'iding, my fine feller," ses he, "if I wasn't in such a hurry," he ses. "Not *you*," ses the sweeper, as cheeky as you please (for he knowed the Captin, d'ye see).

'"Now look here, my man," ses the Captin; "I ain't got time to talk to you, nor lick you neither, *now*, but I'll meet you at Jem Burns' to-morrow hevenin' at nine o'clock, and we'll see which is the best man with the gloves on; and if you licks me," ses he, "why, I'll give you a fi-pun note, and if I licks *you* (which I'm sure to do), why, I'll give you nuffin, except p'raps a glass o' brandy and water." And so sayin', the Captin walks off to his dinner, and the sweeper puts his tongue in his cheek and goes on sweepin' mud over gents' boots 'arder than ever, and thinkin' all the while to himself what a game it was; for he knowed well, he did, what a good genelman the Captin was, and that, no matter which won, it would be a fi-pun note in *his* pocket. How did it finish? Oh, the Captin licked his man in no time. All his friends was there lookin' on at the fun, and the crossin'-sweeper did a good night's work you may depend, Sir. I don't suppose, Sir, when he left the house he ever 'ad so much drink in 'im in his life before.'

'Did I ever see any of the French style o' boxing? Once honly, Sir; which I'll tell you about it. Some years ago now I was a-teachin' a foreign gent, a wicount he was—a French wicount. Well, one afternoon I goes as usual to his rooms in St. James's to give Mossu his lesson, and there was several other foreign gents there, all been 'avin' lunchin and drinkin' shampain with him, and ripe for anythink. Well, I spars as usual with the Wicount, and then I has a turn with another gent, and then another. I could see they knew nothin' about

it, so I took care never to touch 'em, to hurt 'em at all. Well, I had a turn with them all, one after another, with the exception of one who had been settin' smokin' in a corner of the room all the time, and I was just thinking of putting my togs on, havin' a glass of sherry, and being off, when the Wicount he jumps up and he ses, "Hallo! Mossu Mauley, do not go yet. I do want you to 'ave the box-gloves on with my friend Mossu le Dook de Curyso." Well, Sir, I didn't like to offend the Wicount by refusin', so I put on the gloves again, to have a turn with the Dook. He was a great big feller, thirteen stun if he was a hounce, and very powerful. However, I thought nothin' of that, and we set to. Well, we sparred for a minute or two just as usual, when, hall of a sudden, without a word o' warning, my lord he turns his back to me, and kicks out behind like lightning, a-ketchin' me in the throat, right on the jugular wane, with his thin, sharp-pointed boot. For a second or two I felt quite faint like, and my head dropped over my shoulder just like this, Sir.' (Here Mr. Mauley put on a limp appearance, as of one completely knocked out of time, for my better information.) 'However, I soon got round again, and I sparred a bit for wind, and then—*then*, Sir, *I went for 'im*. He tried his cussed French tricks on again and again, but it wasn't a bit of use, I was up to him now, and I *'it* 'im, Sir—I *punched* 'im—and at last, when I had got 'im well beat, I went in with the auctioneer—the right 'and, Sir—and knocked him down as clean as hever I ever floored a man in my life, and then I *fell on 'im, Sir!* And then, Sir,' said Professor Mauley, with an unfeigned look of gratification, 'I turned round to the Wicount and his friends as if nothin' had happened, and I ses, "*Fine hexercise boxin'*, genelmen! *Fine hexercise boxin'!*" Their faces when I sed it was as good as a play.

'The next time as I went to the Wicount's the servant told me he was hout, though I knew he wasn't, 'cos I saw 'im at the winder; and the time after that his walley told me I needn't come any more. Whether he was afraid I should serve him the same as I served his friend, or whether he was ashamed of hisself, I don't know, but I never saw the Wicount again, and don't want to. And now, Sir, just one more turn, if you're not too tired.



see page 164

'Now fifty, Sir, straight from the shoulder, with the bells. One, two—one, two—one, two. That will do, Sir' (Mr. Mauley here bows in a D'Orsay-like manner). 'You box capital, Sir; but hexcuse me,' said the polite Professor, 'a little more work will do you good.'

A STREET FIGHT.

A RIDE ON THE WRONG HORSE.

'WHICH IS THE WAY?'

IT was a fine afternoon in January, and Charlie Daventry, a poor devil of a younger son, as he was wont to describe himself, having come up from the country for a short sojourn in town, as he facetiously said, 'to have his hair cut'—in other words to have a lark—might have been seen wending his way in a desultory manner along Piccadilly. He had just partaken with an excellent appetite of an equally excellent luncheon at the Brawleigh Clubhouse, in company with some dilapidated youngsters, whose envy he had aroused by the vigorous way in which he used his knife and fork; they, poor things! not being able to get beyond a devilled sardine—though, to do them justice, they both could and did 'dwink,' as they said, to any amount. Our friend, then, having eaten and drank as much as he thought would do him until dinner-time, left his used-up companions to consume their coffee and cigars by themselves, whilst he went off to amuse himself with a look at the shops and call on a few of his bachelor acquaintances. At the time we describe he was on his way to the Albany, to look up his friend Jack Latchford, who was laid up with a broken leg, the result of a crumpler some weeks before, whilst in pursuit of the stag in the Vale of Aylesbury. L. 10 (pronounced by his body-servant as if it were 'Hades') was the number the damaged one hung out at, and where Charlie now rang a startling peal at the bell. His friend was, of course,

owing to his accident, at home—very much at home in fact, for he was holding an exceedingly crowded levée at the time of Charlie's visit. The remains of an elaborate luncheon still remained on the table, whilst a perfect army of dead men, in the shape of empty champagne bottles, denoted that the proprietor of the chambers was of a hospitable turn of mind. He himself was stretched on the sofa, whilst some half-dozen mustachioed dandies, in various easy attitudes, were scattered about the room; and, to add to the general hilarity, Miss de Courcy, with her friend 'Baby' Brabazon, both of the Frivolity Theatre, were obliging the company with a comic song, in which they were being accompanied on the piano, with rather a heavy hand, by Popkins of the Lancers, with a cigar in his mouth, who looked as solemn as an undertaker during the performance. The whole strength of the company were joining in the chorus of the last verse as Daventry entered.

'Hooray! Who'd have thought of seeing you? Sit down, my noble sportsman! What'll you have? Bring some more champagne and some curaçoa, John. You'll find weeds on the mantlepiece,' was the greeting he got from his friend on the sofa.

Miss de Courcy whispered to her friend (a stage whisper) that he was a good-looking boy, and made him her very best stage curtsey. The men, some of whom he knew, gave him a nod apiece, and in two minutes he was as 'thick as thieves' with the lot, as he himself would have said. At last the company, ladies and all, took their departure, and Charlie and his host were left to themselves. In consequence of his accident, all his horses had been recently sold at Tattersall's, the latter said, with the exception of one, and *he* would have gone up but for his falling lame at the very last moment—the contrary brute!

'I don't believe though,' Latchford went on, 'that he would have fetched the reserve I put on him, if he *had* gone up, for he's got such a thundering bad character down in the Vale, the chances are, he'd have been blown upon at the sale, and wouldn't have fetched a ten-pound note. It was he gave me this leg—hang him!—and I tell you what, old fellow, if you like to have the riding of him, by all means do—whenever you like. Sell him, if you possibly can. I'll take fifty for him—I gave two

hundred. I know, if any one can make him go, *you* will; and I will give you free leave to break his neck if you like. There he is, standing at Sherman's at Leighton. He's good-looking enough for anything, and he can go if he has a mind to, which he seldom has. The chances are, that if you get into a good thing with him he'll take it in his obstinate head to shut up in the middle of it. That's how I smashed my leg. The hounds were running as hard as ever they could go, over the finest part of the Vale. I was as close to 'em as I well could be, Barebones—that's his confounded name—was, as I thought, in the best of humours, and was going as strong as possible and jumping in fine style, and all was going well, until we came to a biggish fence—which fence lay at the foot of a hill. Judge then of my despair when I felt the brute gradually shutting up under me. I knew as well as possible what he meant to do, and I was determined he should go through if not over. The pace we were going and the incline as well helped me a bit, but even the grasp I took him in, and the dig of the spurs I gave him, wouldn't quite do the trick. The obstinate, pig-headed brute, never rose one single blessed inch; and this' (pointing to his leg) 'is the result. Go and ride him, there's a good fellow,' wound up Latchford; 'and if you *can* sell him for me, so much the better. If you don't, I'll have the beast up in town, pop him in the brougham, and make him do my night work as a punishment for his sins; and if that don't suit him, I'll sell him to a 'bus proprietor.'

To cut a long story short, Charles Daventry, who was always open to a mount, especially in a strange country, no matter on how rough a one, volunteered to run down the very next day that ever was and have a day with the old Squire on the much-abused Barebones. As luck would have it, he had brought his breeches and boots to town with him, as he had meditated running down during his stay and having a day with a friend of his who hunted with the Queen's, so that there was no difficulty on that score; and accordingly he went to bed betimes that night, and the next morning saw him at Euston at an early hour, from which place he took train for Leighton Junction. The train being a slow one, he had it all to himself; and when he reached Leighton the only person on the platform was the proprietor of the neighbouring hotel, the well-known Mr. Sherman.

'Mornin', Squire,' said he, in his basso-profundo voice, addressing our hero as if he had known him all his life, though in reality he had not set eyes on him until that moment. 'Mornin', Squire.' 'Mornin'', responded Charlie, wondering who he was. Mr. S., however, soon made himself known, and taking his bag and wraps, preceded him to his hotel. Having first informed mine host that he was going to ride Captain Latchford's chestnut that day with the Squire, he next ordered a chop to be cooked for himself, whilst the great Mr. Sherman left him, to order the horse to be got ready to start at once. The chop being brought by the fair hands of the ruddy-faced Lucy, and having quickly disappeared, our friend, having lit a cigar, clanked out into the stable-yard.

'Your 'oss is in 'ere, Sir, all ready, turned round in his stall,' said an ostler, who was rubbing and hissing away at a curb-chain after the usual manner of ostlers, addressing Charlie as he entered the yard.

'Oh! he is, is he! bring him out then,' answered that gentleman, putting on his dogskin gloves as he spoke.

In another minute out came Latchford's disreputable chestnut.

'Well,' said Charlie to himself, as he looked him over, 'you are good-looking enough for anything; what a pity it is you've made such a bad name for yourself, you stupid brute!'

And certainly the redoubtable Barebones, so far as looks went, belied his reputation. He stood nearly sixteen hands, with rare shoulders, and great quarters and hocks, that looked as if he possessed power enough to send you

'Smack over a town.'

He was admirably ribbed up, his legs were apparently as sound as a bell of brass, whilst a slightly Roman nose and blaze face gave character to a most intelligent, well-set-on, head. No wonder that the more his rider looked at him the better he liked him. So, having ascertained the route and the distance from the meet, which latter turned out to be quite ten miles off, he mounted without further delay, and off the pair started from the inn yard.

Every one knows what a difficult thing it is to find your way about for the first time in a strange country. Charles Daventry

found it so in the present instance. What with cross-roads here and cross-roads there, and taking the wrong turning some half-a-dozen times, he soon began to feel rather out of it; especially when he had ascertained, as far as he could make out from a man hoeing turnips, that instead of nearing the meet he was about five miles further from it than when he started, three-quarters of an hour before. He was, therefore, delighted when the sound of horses' hoofs behind him made him aware of the approach of another sportsman bound for the meet.

The new-comer was a sporting-looking farmer, on a good-looking young horse, and it turned out that he was going to attend the meet of the Baron's staghounds, and not the Squire's, with whom Charlie intended to hunt; and he was thus early on the road, as he was going, as he said, to call at a friend's house on the way.

'You'd far better go with the Baron, Sir,' said the friendly farmer; 'there's a first-class breakfast at Mr. Blank's, and the stag'll go pretty nigh certain over the very best part of the Vale. It's a woodland meet that of the Squire's, too, and they'll hang about in Scrubbleton Woods maybe all day; besides which,' added he, 'think o' the distance! Why, you're better than ten mile off now!'

Stag or fox naturally made no earthly difference to our sportsman; but, then, how about his horse? If he could *only* depend on him! It would be a decided bore if Barebones were to play his usual game, and shut up just in the very thick of the fun.

'Hang it!' said he; 'I'll chance it! The stag it shall be. I shall be sure of a gallop at all events.' And he added, *sotto voce*, to his horse, 'If you don't do your best, you brute, I'll give you *such* a dressing! See if I don't!'

And having made up his mind, Charlie lit another cigar, and in company with his friend the farmer jogged steadily on.

'Nice 'oss you're on, Sir,' presently remarked the latter.

'Yes, seems so,' was the answer. 'Do you know him at all?'

'Ah! know him well! A rare good 'un he is, too; only wants to be ridden by a workman.'

'That's odd, too,' thought Charlie, who, however, said

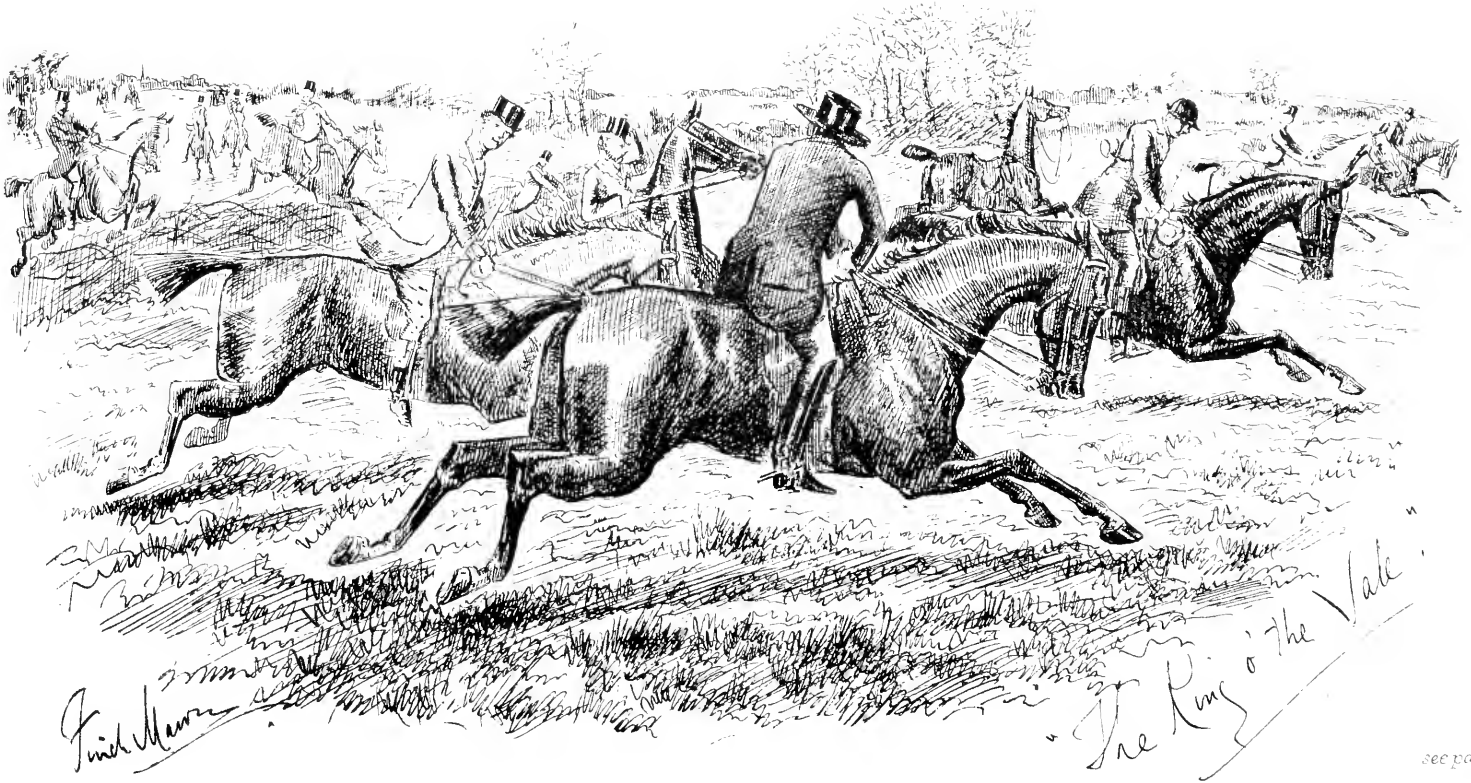
nothing. 'Perhaps Jack Latchford has lost his nerve. He used to be as hard as nails, though. I can hardly imagine that event can have happened just yet. There's one thing,' said he to himself, 'you're as nice a hack for a big 'un as I ever rode, and if you are only as pleasant all day as you are now, you'll do.'

By this time they had arrived at the meeting-place—a large mansion. The hounds had not yet arrived, but there were already a goodly number of sportsmen assembled in front of the house; and by this time, feeling rather peckish again, Charles Daventry dismounted, and having given the redoubtable chestnut to a man to hold, promptly accepted the invitation of the hospitable host, and forthwith went into the house in search of food, which he found in the shape of a most elaborate breakfast, with unlimited champagne, laid out for all comers; to which he did full justice, you may depend, and came out feeling a man all over, as he expressed it. Our sportsman then went in search of Barebones, and by this time Fred Cox and the hounds having arrived, he mounted forthwith, and proceeded to take stock of everybody. Next came the uncarting of the stag, which event took place on a large piece of common land not far from the house; and then in due time the hounds were laid on. What a scene of excitement it was! Away they all went. Such hustling and bustling. Lords, ladies, Guardsmen from town, sportsmen of every degree, headed by the 'King of the Vale,' jack-booted and flat-brimmed-hatted as usual, whom Charlie took the liberty of following over the first fence, and who turned half round in his saddle to inform that young gentleman, as they galloped along together, with a look of intense satisfaction on his jolly face, and a hearty smack of his thigh, that they are now about to run over the very finest part of the Vale. There was a blazing scent and the hounds were going like great guns.

'Are they fast enough for you to-day, Colonel?' inquires Fred Cox as he lands over a big fence, in company with a well-known hard-riding soldier, who is handling the young 'un he's on to admiration.

'Wun like the Davvle, Fwed,' is the reply, given in the most drawling of tones.

So far the chestnut had behaved to perfection, and Charlie,



see page 112

couldn't make it out at all. 'Why, a child might ride him!' exclaimed he, as, pulling Barebones into a trot, he went in and out of a big boundary fence, the horse as handy as a lady's-maid. As for refusing, his mount did not seem to know what it meant. Apparently delighted with the light weight he was carrying, he did not seem to tire at all; in short, never did horse and rider agree better than those two did; and Charlie Daventry, who had been in the front rank from end to end, heaved a sigh of regret when the stag was taken, after a brilliant run, and the fun was consequently all over for the day. There was nothing for it but to turn Barebones' head towards Leighton, which he accordingly did, and, by way of company, jogged amicably along with a well-known dealer, with whom he had a slight acquaintance. That worthy soon expressed his admiration of the chestnut, who, he remarked, he had watched during the run, jumping 'owdacious.'

'Yes! nice horse!' said Charlie. 'His owner wants to sell him.'

'Does he, indeed?' said Mr. Snaffle. 'What's the figger? do you know, Sir?' added he, eagerly.

'*Two hundred*,' answered Charlie, promptly, putting on a hundred and fifty on his own account.

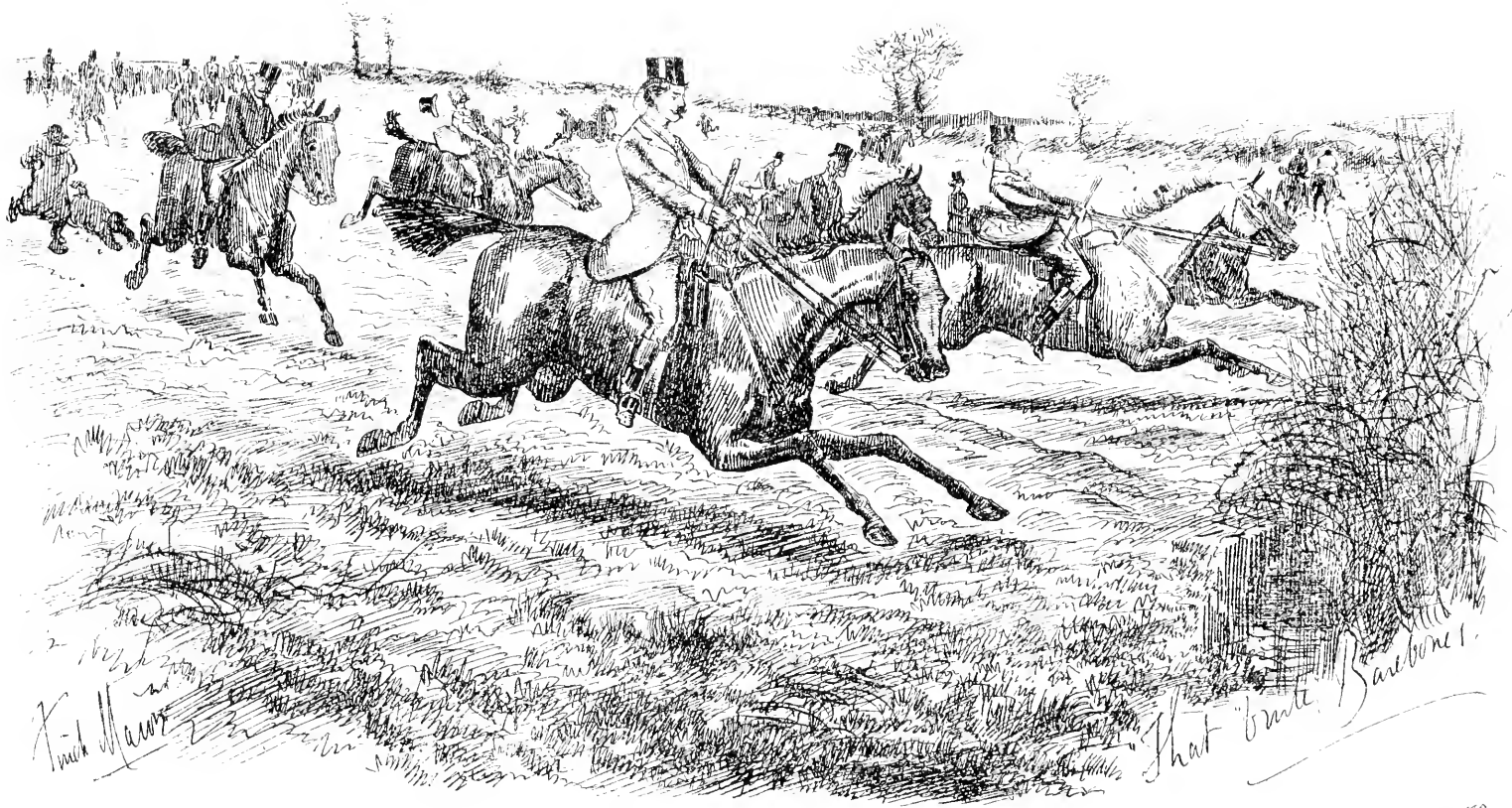
'Well, I'll give it,' as promptly returned the dealer, much to Charlie's astonishment. 'And I'll tell you what I'll do, Sir,' said he, 'if you like. We're nearer Bletchley a good deal than Leighton, and Bletchley's where my stables are, and if you like I'll take the horse just as he stands, write you a cheque on the spot, and you can catch the quick train to town from there without going all the way back to Leighton.'

'Done with *you!*' exclaimed Charlie, in delight, thinking how pleased Latchford would be; and accordingly, without more ado, he accompanied Mr. Snaffle to Bletchley, gave Barebones a parting pat, pocketed the dealer's cheque, partook of a glass of whisky and water in company with that worthy, and having borrowed a rug from him to cover his knees, went off comfortably in the express for London in the best possible spirits, feeling he had done a rare good day's work. Two hours later —he had driven straight to the Albany when he reached the metropolis—he was laughing and chaffing with the invalid over the cheque received for the good-for-nothing Barebones,

when their mirth was suddenly interrupted by a tremendous ring at the doorbell. Another second, and, pushing past the servant, an excited little man, with a very red face and a terrible black eye, suddenly bounced into the room.

'Are you the fellow who stole my horse and left a good-for-nothing brute, not worth eighteenpence, in its place, Sir, this morning, at Leighton Buzzard? *Are* you, Sir? *Are* you?' shouted he, picking out Daventry, who was still in pink, and marching up to him, as he stood on the hearthrug, in a threatening manner. 'Look at *me*, Sir! Look at my eye, Sir! Look at my hat, Sir!' (showing his damaged head-gear.) 'Look *here*, Sir'—(the little man at this point tore open his ulster and disclosed a figure literally covered with mud underneath). 'This is what your brute of a horse has done, Sir! Where's *my* horse, Sir? Will you tell me, Sir, or *am* I to call in the aid of the police?' And the excited little gentleman, who by this time foamed at the mouth with rage and excitement, paused for sheer want of breath, and sunk into the nearest chair quite exhausted.

'My *dear* Sir,' insinuatingly began Latchford from the sofa; and that, I regret to say, was as far as he got, for, catching Charlie's eye, he burst into a roar of laughter, in which he was joined by his equally amused friend. The upshot of it was that little Major Plumper (that was the stranger's name), who turned out to be a trump, after hearing Charlie's story joined as heartily in the laugh as they did; though it turned against himself. It was, of course, a mistake from beginning to end. The Major's groom, after saddling his master's horse, had turned him round in his stall and gone off to the station to wait for the slip-carriage of the down train in which his master would sure to be. The two horses were both chestnuts, hence there was some slight excuse to be made for the officious ostler, the cause of the whole blunder. Mr. Snaffle's cheque was sent back, and he, knowing all parties concerned, sent back the horse in the most obliging manner, much as he regretted the mistake for his own sake, for well he knew in giving two hundred for Barebones he had got hold of a real bargain. The two sportsmen dined together in the invalid's rooms that evening, and the little Major, who got exceedingly convivial later on as the claret circulated, and seemed to have taken a fancy to Charlie, went the length of promising that young



see page 113

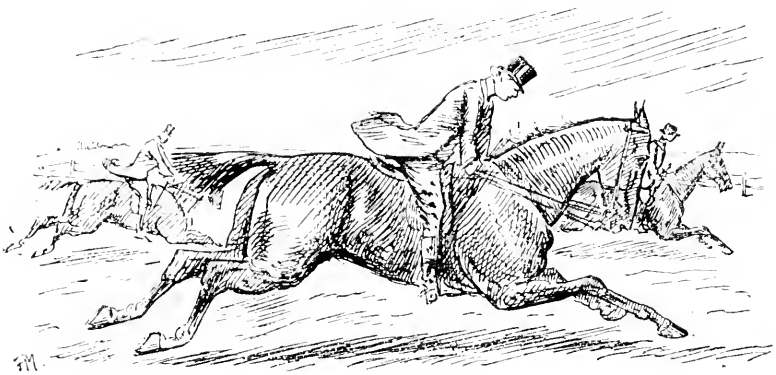
gentleman another mount on the chestnut 'one of these fine days.' Whether that event ever came off we don't remember—the promise of anything good 'one of these fine days' being, we always think, not by any means a certainty to go upon—but we have repeatedly heard Charles Daventry say that he never before or since enjoyed a run with hounds half so much as when he had that good gallop with the Baron's staghounds 'on the wrong horse.'

A RUN WITH THE BARON.

Mem.—As the gentle reader may possibly care to know what ultimately became of the disreputable Barebones, we will tell all we know in Jack Latchford's own words:—

'I was turning one day, old fellow,' said he, 'out of Piccadilly into Duke Street, where, as you know, there's generally a bit of a block, when I was suddenly aware that there was a bigger block than usual. Cabbies were swearing, cads were chaffing, bobbies were remonstrating—*such* a row! And the cause of it all was a chestnut horse, who, having backed the Hansom cab he was harnessed to well up against Fortnum and Mason's side-door, was now standing, with his fore-legs stretched out, declining to move another yard. In vain did the driver flog him; in vain did the masher inside hit him with his umbrella; in vain did a bobby come up, and, taking hold of his head, adjure him to "move on:" except to turn at the peeler, with his ears back,

and nearly bite his nose off, the horse took not the slightest notice. Then something struck me. Surely I ought to know that slightly Roman nose, with the patch of white on it, and those two white heels? Why, it's that brute Barebones! Of course it is! There's that mark on his shoulder, too, that I gave him with my spur that day in the Vale, when we were both down, and he came at me on his knees to eat me, the greedy beast! And so it was, old fellow; it was my old horse safe enough. As I walked away some one in the crowd was proposing to light a fire under him; and,' wound up his late master, 'that's the last I saw of Barebones.'



OVER THE GRASS.

AN EXPENSIVE DAY'S SPORT.

PARTRIDGE SHOOTING.

IT has for years been my especial pride —not to say boast— that so surely does that day so well beloved of sportsmen, to wit, 'the first of September,' come round, so surely shall I, Percival Poppleton, barrister-at-law, King's Bench Walk, Temple, and Western Circuit, be found on that day, be it hot, be it cold, be it wet, be it dry, perhaps with my dog, certainly with my gun, disporting myself gaily in stubble and turnips, in mangolds, in clover, in hot pursuit of game, in the shape of that plump, bright-eyed little dickey-bird, the partridge.

Judge, then, of my disgust, on one particular year, when the third week in August drew to a close and found me—me, Percival Poppleton—in my chambers in the Temple, actually without a single invitation of any sort or kind.

What were my friends in the different counties about? What had come to them all? There was my license all ready, lying carelessly on the mantlepiece. In one corner of my room reclined my gun, in its case; several boxes of cartridges stood one on top of another by its side; three pairs of shooting-boots, carefully greased, mounted guard by the door; and all this display, thought I, for nothing! Certainly it was, as the *Field* took care to tell its readers, a shocking bad year for birds everywhere; but still, for all that, I have hitherto always managed to disport myself somewhere! Dash it all! why didn't I go to Germany with the Flutterbys?—charming girls, Cissy and Nelly Flutterby, and I flatter myself the fair Cissy

is rather partial to—— but no matter. Why didn't I, when he was good enough to ask me, accompany Tom Topsle in his yacht to Norway? What an ass I am! thought I, getting up and lighting a cigar, and strolling to the window. Ha, ha! the postman! A hundred to one against a letter for me! I've lost my bet though; for he of the blue coat and red collar is plainly making for my staircase. I meet him outside my door with feverish anxiety. 'Mr. Poppleton?' Mr. Poppleton it is. In hot haste the envelope is torn open. Here, Postman, here's half-a-crown for you. Hooray! shouted I, sinking into my arm-chair. I'm booked for the 'first' after all.

The letter turned out to be from my friend, my old friend, Wobbleton. He had a nice little bit of shooting, he told me, in Hertfordshire. Unfortunately, his old aunt in Westmoreland, of whom I had no doubt heard him speak, from whom he had great expectations (lucky dog, Wobbleton!) had just shuffled off this mortal coil, at the ripe old age of ninety-two, and he, Wobbleton, having to repair to the wilds of Westmoreland to attend her obsequies and wind up affairs, would, in consequence, have to put off his shooting. He wanted a few birds killed on the 'first' in order to propitiate his tenants. Would I, like a good fellow, if not too much trouble (trouble! that's a good one!) would I (wouldn't I?) run down, and take a friend if I liked—it's only an hour from town—and shoot over his ground on the 'first?' He advises me to take a dog down, as, though his man has one, he is a young one, and he does not know anything about him. I am to give three brace and a hare to each of the farmers (there are two of them) whose land I shoot over, he himself would like a couple of brace sent to him in Westmoreland, and the rest he begs I will keep for myself. Birds, he is told, are scarce, but the cover is good, so he hopes I shall have a tolerably good day,

And remains, very sincerely mine,

WILLIAM WOBBLETON.

Was ever such a piece of luck? Instead of making one of a party, having my eye wiped every five minutes by better shots than myself, and looked upon as a mere nobody, here am I, taking Wobbleton's place, ordering his keeper about as

if he were my own, asking my friend to shoot with me, as if the place belonged to me. Oh, it's delightful—perfectly delightful! I wrote off the most grateful letter ever seen to Wobbleton, and then went out in the happiest of spirits for the purpose of taking a little luncheon. Where could I get a better one than at the 'Rainbow?' That cold beef looks delicious. I'll have some, and some mashed potatoes, and some pickles, and a pint of 'the Boy.' 'Perry Jewy,' the waiter recommends. Perry Jewy be it then. Under its influence I can't divest myself of the idea that the prosperous-looking head-waiter is a plump cock partridge, and find myself wondering whether he has a red horseshoe on his breast under his lily-white shirt-front.

The next question in my mind was, Who was to be my guest on the eventful day? Nearly every one I knew had gone out of town. Stay! Why shouldn't Tom Sheepskin do?

It has always been impressed upon me, that in order to get on at the bar there is nothing like propitiating the lawyers. Young Tom Sheepskin is the son and heir of Sheepskin the well-known solicitor of Lincoln's Inn (Sheepskin, Slatem, and Sheepskin).

He's the very man! I know he's in town, for I saw him yesterday. I'll ask him at once. Who knows? It may lead to no end of briefs.

Away goes the note, favoured by the youth who calls himself my clerk. Back comes the answer. Sheepskin will be delighted. That's all right. Now there's only the question of the dog. Wobbleton said in his letter I was to be sure and take a dog. Suppose I go and consult my gunsmith? Capital idea! Act upon it at once.

Gunsmith agrees with me. *Must* have a dog. The question is how to get one. If he had only known two days ago! He had the very thing. However, he'll ask a friend of his that evening, who generally knows of a good dog, and will let me know the first thing in the morning.

Next morning I receive a note from the gunsmith. Will I step round, as a friend of his has brought a spaniel dog he thinks will just suit me. I step round as requested, and am forthwith introduced to the gunsmith's friend and his dog—a remarkably handsome Clumber spaniel. 'Which,' explained the

friend, 'he hain't my dog, you hunderstand, Sir ; he belongs to my wife's sister's husband, and we're only a takin' care of him for him, as it were. Flush, that's his name, Sir, ain't for sale ; in fact, my wife's sister's husband wouldn't take fifty pounds for the dog, his looks alone being worth that amount for stud purposes. But not 'avin any shootin' of his own, he would like some genelman that had to take the dog and use him, and return him when the season was over. He was shot hover the beginning of last season by a genelman, and he believed gave satisfaction.'

To make a long story short, Flush was to be delivered at my chambers the night before the 'first,' and I was to shoot *over* him not *into* him, eh? ha! ha!) on that day, and return him the next, for which fun the sum of half-a-sovereign was agreed to be paid by me.

The thirty-first of August arrived, and with it Flush. All was in readiness. The hamper containing our luncheon was packed ; my shooting clothes were all laid out ready to put on ; my patent knife, a game-stick, a new game-bag, cartridge ditto : which latter will be carried by my clerk, for whom I have purchased a pair of long yellow leggings, and who is nearly as excited as his master.

Thanks to the restlessness of the renowned Flush and the whirl of excitement my brain is in, I suppose a worse night was never passed by a gentleman. By the way, if restlessness constitutes a sportsman, assuredly my clerk is not one, for I heard him, all through the night, snoring like a pig. (He had made up a temporary bed in the passage, so as to be on the 'spot,' as he called it.)

The 1st of September! As the clock strikes a quarter to nine a four-wheeled cab, containing myself and belongings, arrives at the Euston Square Station. As I am paying the driver, Sheepskin arrives in a Hansom. Sheepskin is so gorgeously apparelled that he attracts the gaze of every one. All the porters who are not busy come and have a look at him. Used as they are to sportsmen, they evidently haven't seen such a swell for a long while. I felt quite proud of him.

My brother-sportsman and I at last are settled in a first-class carriage ; my clerk and Flush ditto in the guard's van, and away we go.

'Crabtree Road! Crabtree Road!' shouts the fustian-attired porter-station-master, as the train draws up at a pretty little roadside station. Here we are. An elderly party, attired in a velveteen coat, long leggings, and a very tall hat, salutes us on landing.

'Be you the genelman as is a-going to shoot at Muster Wobbleton's?' inquired he.

On my informing him that he is right in his conjecture, he proceeded to tell me that he was the keeper, that his name was Smith, and that he was come to show us the way.

'If we walks along the line we baint above a mile from where we begins,' said he.

A youth in a smock-frock, leading a great curly retriever with a string, now appeared, grinning double.

'This be Muster Wobbleton's dog,' said the ancient. 'He be rather wild, but he be a good bred 'un.'

The station-master, with an eye to perhaps a couple of rabbits, having promised to send the luncheon to the farm in the course of the morning, we then out with guns and prepare for a start. Half-an-hour's brisk walking brings us on to our ground, and a halt is made for a council of war.

'Now,' says the ancient Smith, solemnly, 'birds is werry scarce this year, and the cover is werry okkard, and just over this 'ere 'edge is Muster Oldacre's ground, three turmot fields one arter another, and some standin' barley, so we must keep this 'ere left side well forrard, or helse our birds 'll pop over and we shall never see no more on 'em all the blessed day.'

Field-Marshal Smith evidently knows what he is about, so we are just proceeding to take his advice and beat the field (a large wheat stubble), keeping the left side well forrard, when we are interrupted by a fresh arrival in the shape of a groom mounted on a young horse of Wobbleton's. He has come to find out where we should like luncheon.

And now comes our first misadventure. It suddenly occurs to me, as an exceedingly happy idea, that, the day being hot and the stubble bare, we might just as well save our legs by sending Wobbleton's groom to ride round the field, with Smith and Co. to walk, whilst Sheepskin and I sit comfortably under a hedge and smoke our pipes. The motion is carried, and away

they go. They have not started three minutes before a covey of birds, who have been dusting themselves close under the hedge, rise just in front of Wobbleton's young horse. This is quite enough for him. He's as fresh as paint, and the groom can't ride. Away he goes like lightning. We watch his mad career

MASTER'S YOUNG HORSE.

with horror. See! he jumps the fence at the end as if it were a haystack, shooting the unfortunate groom up into the air like an india-rubber ball.

'Mas'r wouldn't a took two 'underd guineas for that there 'orse,' remarks old Smith, with a solemn shake of his aged head, by way of comfort. 'Yer see, sir, mas'r bred 'im 'isself, so it makes him hextra fond on him, d'ye see,' added the venerable one.

Frich Mason
Master wouldn't a took two underd guineas for that there 'orse.

see page 22

'Thank goodness the man isn't hurt!' now exclaimed Sheepskin.

'Thank Heaven!' echoed I, as getting on rising ground we caught sight of the groom running after the young horse. Old Smith then comes up panting.

'He has just put up a covey of birds and he has marked 'em down,' he says, 'into the turmots. Don't we think we'd better go arter 'em?'

We do. Now for business. We will see, too, what the Clumber is like.

He does not seem to me a very *keen* dog, for he plods along at my heels and seems to notice nothing. Down one side of the turmots we march, Wobbleton's big retriever straining at the leash. We are half way back again when whi—r—r! up get the birds right in front of me. '*Mark!*' shouts that old idiot Smith, thereby making me miss both barrels. Sheepskin has knocked one down, but it is a runner.

Now's the time for Flush to show us a taste of his qualities. 'Seek dead! Flush! seek, old man! Seek, good dawg!' I cry to him. Why, what on earth's the matter with the dog? He looks wildly at me for a second, and then runs off with his tail between his legs as hard as ever he can go. 'Flush! Flush! ye brute, *Flush!*' Not a bit of it! The more we call, the faster he goes. I have my gun up for a second, but think of the fifty guineas he is valued at, and hold my hand. Ha! he stops for a second in the next field, but only for a second; for see, away he goes again harder than ever.

'It ain't a bit o' good a-goin' arter *him*, that's wery certain,' says old Smith.

'Not a bit, he's gun shy, the brute,' chimes in Sheepskin.

I cannot but agree, though that horrid fifty guineas will keep cropping up in my mind.

'And now, genelmen,' says the ancient keeper, taking an old red handkerchief from the interior of his hat and mopping his brow, 'there ain't no more turmots for ever so fur, so we must beat the stubbles and drive the birds afore us into Muster Bullock's twenty-acre field, and if we can get 'em in there maybe they'll lay to ye.'

Accordingly away we go, and precious hot work it is. The

stubbles, needless to say, are as bare as one's hand, thanks to the machines of the present day.

However, we pick up a brace of birds and a hare or two, and have driven several good coveys into the big turnip-field, which we are now rapidly nearing.

'Hooray!' exclaim Sheepskin and I with one voice, as we enter the last of the stubble-fields, and the sight of the man with the lunch at the far corner by the hayrick puts renewed life into us. We drive one more covey into the turnips, and then the pair of us make a rush for the luncheon-basket.

Even old Smith says he feels as if it was bever time.

With what appetites the luncheon was disposed of need not be told. Suffice it to say that, with the exception that my youthful clerk was supposed to have swallowed a hornet in his beer, the meal passed off without the slightest hitch, and after a pipe all round we once more prepared for action.

There was no doubt about it; the turnip-field we were about to enter was cramfull of birds; it was capital cover, and if we only shot straight we ought to get at least eight or ten brace of birds out of it.

Now for mishap No. 3. We had not gone a dozen yards before up got a brace of old birds. Bang! bang! They both dropped to my unerring tube, right and left. 'I wonder what Sheepskin thought of *that* performance!' said I to myself. One is picked up. What a splendid bird he is! The other can't be found.

'Shall I let the Squire's dog goo?' inquired old Smith.

'Well, p'raps you'd better,' I replied.

The next moment I repented, for the brute went off like a shot from a gun. Never was such a thing seen. A hare got up in front of him. Away he went after it. Then another hare got up. He left the first one and went after that. He barked, he yelped with joy, he snapped at the birds as they got up under his nose, he pranced, he jumped. Never did dog, I will venture to say, enjoy himself more in a turnip-field than this brute of Wobbleton's, and never did two sportsmen feel more utterly crushed and defeated than did Sheepskin and myself. Suffice it to say, that in about twenty minutes Peter (that was the brute's name) returned to us dead beat—too beat even to resent the elaborate licking he received from the irate Mr.

Smith, having driven clean away every bird that was in the field.

What was to be done? We couldn't go and beat the stubbles again, we hadn't time. The only thing to do now was to go and beat a little bit of barley there was left standing under the nine-acres wood.

'Come on,' said I, catching at the idea; 'we'll go there straight;' and, added Sheepskin, 'Mind and hold that infernal dog tight.'

We enter the barley. Up gets something in front of Sheepskin. Down it comes. By Jove! it's a pheasant. Up gets something in front of me. Down *it* comes. Another pheasant. Bang! bang! bang! bang!

Up they get and down they come. What a lark it is!

Old Smith says nothing, but grins a Mephistophelian grin as another brace falls to me right and left. We emerge from the free and happy barley.

Nine brace and a half of birds and a landrail. 'Pull out their tails and call 'em *French partridges*,' suggested the wily Sheepskin, with an ingenuity I didn't really give that young man credit for.

Well, we have not done so badly after all; and now the only thing to do is to make the best of our way back to the station, picking up a stray bird or two on the way. We are just going to start when we are accosted by a red-whiskered person leaning over a gate.

'I beg pardon, gents,' said Red-whiskers, 'but would you kindly inform me if this is the fust of Hoctober?'

'October? No. It's the first of September, stoopid!' replies Sheepskin.

''Cos a seein' o' you gents a-knockin' o' the pheasants about, you know, made me think I had mistook the day like. You see, genelmen, I'm a hofficer o' the Hinland Revenue, and——'

Need I say more? Five pounds apiece it took to square Red-whiskers.

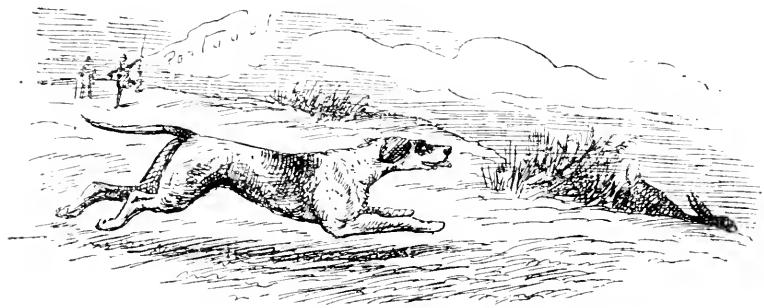
It was a nice wind-up to our day, certainly. My valuable fifty-pound spaniel never turned up again, and I was soon after engaged in an action at law with his irate master.

Wobbleton's young horse galloped nearly ten miles before they could catch him. Wobbleton says the horse is ruined for

life, and it was all my fault. We have been cool to each other ever since.

Whether Wobbleton heard of our doings in the barley I don't know. I wonder, by the way, what his tenants thought of the 'French partridges?'

Mem.—I am inclined to doubt whether Wobbleton will ever ask me to shoot again.



BRICKET WOOD.—A Recollection.

EN ROUTE TO BRICKET.

'BRICKET WOOD! Bricket Wood!' shouts the fustian-attired half-porter, half-station-master, as our train glides slowly into the pretty little wood-side (roadside as well for the matter of that) station, belonging to the London and North-Western Railway, so well known to all Hertfordshire sportsmen, and a good many others besides, who are partial to what the late Mr. Delmé Radcliffe so aptly called 'the noble science.'

What! *nobody* for Bricket Wood? Well! only old Jimmy Sheers, Muster Dickison's* cowman, who wakes up from a good old-fashioned sodden sleep just as the train is about to move on, and is hauled out neck and crop by the station-master just in time to avoid being taken on to St. Albans. Jimmy has been to Watford to get some medicine for a sick 'coo,' as he calls it; and the day being hot, and Jimmy being thirsty, it is only natural that he should imbibe a mug, not to say several mugs, of beer in the course of his pilgrimage; and as the said beer was not of that light, airy, sparkling description supplied by Messrs. Ind, Coope, and Co. to, and consumed with so much satisfaction by, the nobility and gentry of the land, but was, on the contrary, a liquid of a dark-brown colour, thick in substance (it went down like treacle) and sweet to the palate—in fact, stuff, a couple of mugs of which would be warranted to give

* Hertfordshire for Dickinson.

any ordinary being congestion of the brain on the spot, it is not to be wondered at that before even the train left Watford Station, Jimmy, in the corner of his third-class carriage, was fast asleep.

Shriek! goes the engine, as if in righteous disgust at the delay, and away we go again, the last thing we see being the perplexed face of old Jimmy Sheers, who is being anathematised by the station-master for not producing his ticket, which, of course, he can't find.

As we take a last look out of the window at the old wood, what memories does it not recall! All the sportsmen we have

'WHERE'S YOUR TICKET?'

ever seen at different times disporting themselves in its swampy scrubs seem grouped together in the cloud of smoke emanating from our cigar, which is meandering in graceful wreaths above our head. It seems to us only the other day that we made our first appearance, when a small boy—a very small boy—at the well-known meet at the cross-roads. There they all are, in that particular wreath of smoke; that one that *will* hang to the top of the carriage, for it declines altogether to go out of the window. Yes; there they are as plain as a pike-staff. Who is the thin, wiry old gentleman in black, with brown tops, and not the very best of hats, who gives us a friendly lead over a ditch in the heart of the wood, bidding us at the same time to 'hold your

see page 129.

pony together, my boy?' A whip passing us as we emerge into a friendly ride addresses him as 'My lord.' So it immediately dawns on us that it must be Lord Lonsdale, the master, and none other (for it is an 'Old Berkeley' day at Bricket); and then, as we emerge on to the scrubs on our pony, who has already had nearly enough of the fun, we come across our parental governor, who first blows us up for having left his side, and then proceeds to point out to our admiring gaze the celebrated head of the house of Morgan—Jim, to wit. He is just about to

RALPH SMITH.

point out some one else, when—hark! is that a halloo at the far end of the scrubs? Yes, it is. 'It's a find!' shouts Lord Lonsdale's *fidus Achates*, jolly old Brown, passing us at a gallop. (The last time we saw Mr. B. was, we rather think, the week before Blair Athol's Derby, winning a hunters' race at Harpenden by any number of lengths.)

'He's away to Munden,' cries Ralph Smith of the Wild Farm, his jolly old face, always ruddier than the cherry, ruddier than usual. 'Come along, young gentleman!' and, setting spurs to his rat-tailed nag, away he goes, best pace; and as we got our

pony by the head to follow suit, the obstinate cloud of cigar smoke takes its departure out of window, and Lord Lonsdale, Mr. Brown, Jim Morgan, and Ralph Smith, vanish into space. Another good pull at the cigar, and away goes another cloud of smoke.

What is the picture this time? we wonder. Another meet at Bricket Wood, by the Lord Harry! and once more the Old Berkeley. Some years have elapsed, evidently; for on looking carefully we no longer see amongst the crowd the black coat and the brown-topped boots of Lord Lonsdale; and surely the huntsman is a younger man. That smart, dapper-looking man wearing the yellow plush can't be old Jim Morgan? 'It's a chip of the old block, though,' says yon sportsman from town to a friend, 'for it's his son Goddard.' 'Here comes my lord!' is the

THE MASTER OF THE O. B. H.

cry, and Lord Maldon, the most popular master the O. B. H. have ever perhaps known, accompanied by my lady, canters

becomingly up to the hounds. They're going to draw Burston Wood first, so let's jog along.

What a lot of people, to be sure, are assembled outside the covert! 'Woa! Jowwocks. Be quiet, *do!*' Mr. Solly of Serge Hill, red in the face from a game at 'Pull baker, pull devil,' with his clever grey cob, whose only fault is pulling his master's arms off, and who at the present moment is doing his best to prevent him from lighting a cigar and exchanging greetings with his reverence from Aldenham Lodge, who has just turned up on the

CAPTAIN RAMSAY.

black pony. Captain 'Jim' Ramsay, on his well-bred chestnut mare, is admiring his own boots *en profile*, and chaffing his friend Lawyer Rooper on the merits of that 'Fox's Tale'

of his in *Baily* of last month; whilst Mr. Sydney Wilson, with a cigar as big as himself in his mouth, larks his latest

MR. WILSON.

purchase in horseflesh over a fence, to the special admiration of that plumpest of stockbrokers, Jack Barnes, who inwardly wishes he could ride the same weight—or even double would do.

Old Charley Webber, on his broken-winded, flea-bitten, old grey, has just made a sporting bet of a fiver with Mr. George Nicholas, who has come down from town in company with hard-riding Miss Kitty, as to the length of the Watford Tunnel, which bet old 'Crafty'—as William Capel used playfully to call him—if we recollect right, won in a canter, causing by so doing great weeping and gnashing of teeth in Abchurch Lane, and ultimately almost a breach of the peace when the pair met at Park Street Station one fine day.

'Twang, twang, twang!' goes Goddard Morgan's horn. Burston Wood is no good; and Bricket proper is now the venue. More people waiting for us in the road, for Bricket is a rare place to hang about in, though we *have* known 'em slip away from there and run to Serge Hill or Long Wood before the chattering, cigar-smoking crowd in the scrubs have found it out. Let us look around us. Lord Ebury in antigropelos and a great-coat, on a very small pony, doesn't *look* much like going; as who would, wearing such monstrosities as antigropelos? (For the matter of that, we have seen George Fordham jump a

big place in antigropelos before now.) But before the day is over the small pony will carry my lord over some uncomfortable places in a way that would make many a hunter look foolish. Jackbooted Mr. Cobb (the hardest man of the lot) is discussing the chance of a find with Ben Toovey and old Harry Oldaker,

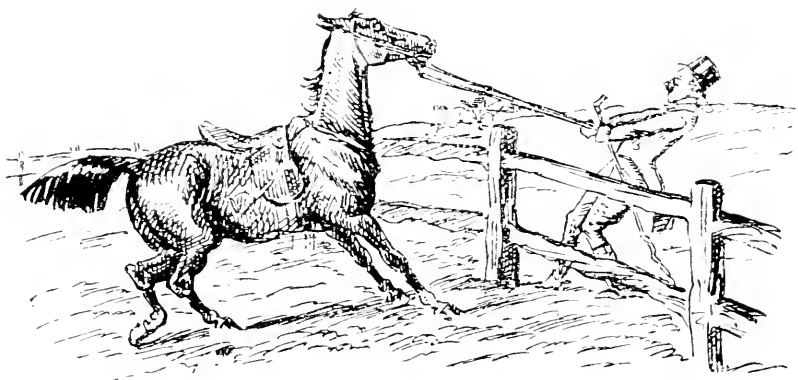
THE MASTER OF KYTES.

whilst William Capel, his eccentric neighbour, velvet-capped and swallowtail-coated as usual, is chaffing a boy home from Eton, which same boy bears a strong resemblance to what the writer of this sketch was about that time, and telling him he wants him to come over some morning soon to 'Kytes' before daylight, because those dashed Munden pheasants *will* come his side of the wood and eat all *his* birds' barley; and before he can get at 'em, Haylock, the Munden keeper, goes and drives them all back, confound him! Needless to say his young friend and pupil jumps at the notion, for many a lark do he and the Lord of Kytes have together in the course of the year.

Iltid Nicholl, fresh from Bicester, on Snowball, is telling Uncle John that the rough goer he is on is the thing of all others for his liver; whilst that gentleman in his turn is complimenting in an ironical manner on his horsemanship young Royds, from Aldenham, who, in a blue funk, has just arrived on a broken-winded old carriage-horse of his father's. Selby of the black beard, on his clever old chestnut, most sporting of farmers,

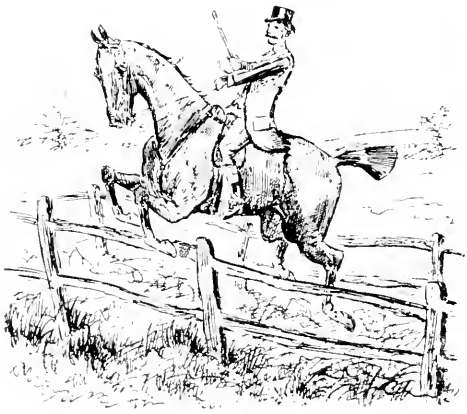
is asking the equally sporting Doctor Bell Irving what sort of a lot of greyhounds he's got this year, and when the next meeting of the Watford Club is? Next turns up the hope of the house of Newberries, until lately an 'Arrer gent,' as Mr. Benjamin Buckram would say; but now of Cambridge, sporting for the first time a red coat, the appearance of the pink being utterly spoilt by the addition of a dreadful pair of tops, which tops it turns out were turned out by the simple bootmaker of the neighbouring village of Park Street, which accounts for the milk in the cocoa-nut, as the showman would say. That ardent lover of the sport, Mr. Charles Longman of Shendish, accompanied by his equally sporting brother William, and his son Arthur (the latter since blossomed into a full-blown master on his own account), is of course there. 'What's that?' says Mr. Longman. 'Is it a halloo?' 'By Jove it is! and he's away for Gorhambury, as sure as a gun,' exclaims Harvey Fellowes, who, without more ado, crams his felt hat well down on to his head, and hustles the black cob along as hard as ever he can lay legs to the ground. 'Yes; Goddard Morgan has given 'em all the slip, and Captain Ramsay, Selby, Mr. Cobb, and William Capel, the latter taking a line of his own, are the only ones anywhere near the hounds.'

Our cigar has gone out; the cloud of smoke has vanished out of window; the train goes short for a few seconds and then pulls up; and finally a leather-lunged porter, bellowing 'St. Horlbuns,' at the top of his voice, puts an abrupt ending to our pleasant dream of dear old Bricket Wood.



'COME UP, YOU BRUTE!'

JACK TALBOT'S CHRISTMAS-BOX.



IN AND OUT CLEVER.

'DO I like Christmas? I should rather think I did,' exclaimed, somewhat excitedly, my friend and host, Jack Talbot, in answer to a question just put by me. 'What! haven't I told you yet,' continued he, 'about that wonderful Christmas-box I received just three years ago?' 'No!' 'Then light another cigar, sit you down, and I'll tell you all about it as a wind-up before we go to bed.' So saying, my friend Jack mixed himself and me a fresh brandy and soda a-piece, lighted a fresh cigar, and drawing his arm-chair closer up to the smoking-room fire, patted his favourite retriever, who wagged her tail approvingly, and forthwith commenced his story:—

'I dare say,' said he, 'you are rather surprised at me, of all persons in the world, being so enthusiastic in the praises of the approaching festive season, for I remember well, when last we met, before you left England, my being quite the *blasé* man about town, thoroughly bored with everything more or less, and, doubtless, showing it, and certainly in those days I looked forward to Christmas with anything but delight. What with Christmas-bills and Christmas-boxes, and not being fond of turkey (though I rather like a leg of him deviled for breakfast), and hating mince-pies, and not caring for plum-pudding, all one's little arrangements being upset, my own man even going wrong, and all because it's Christmas time. Altogether I must

confess to having been always uncommonly pleased when the week was over. However, my ideas are all changed now, and I will proceed to tell you the why and the wherefore.

'Three years ago, then, just about a fortnight before Christmas, on opening my letters one fine morning, I found one was from my dear friend Mrs. Waverly, begging me to come and spend what she called the "festive season," and as much longer as I cared to, at Blackgrove Park, and to be sure and bring my horses as well, and do some hunting.

'Now it chanced that on that very identical morning, as I laid in bed, I had been debating with myself whether I would not run over to Paris for a fortnight or so, and thus get rid of the hundred and one nuisances belonging to Christmas. I had quite made up my mind to go by the time I had finished dressing, when Mrs. Waverly's letter arrived, and, after reading it through a second time, I determined to change my mind. I would put off Paris until Easter, and go to Blackgrove instead; for, besides the fact of Mrs. Waverly herself being very charming, was not Tom Waverly, her husband, the very best of good fellows? Their children, too, were, for a wonder, perfection. I am sure many a gay bachelor will agree with me that it makes all the difference in the world to one's comfort in a country house if the children of the establishment are nice and "down charge" well, as the gamekeepers say, or *vice versâ*. The shooting I knew was capital, too, and the hunting first rate. But that was not all; there was a postscript to Mrs. Waverly's letter which I forgot to mention, and in nine cases out of ten, as you must be well aware, the pith of a woman's letter always lies in the postscript. It proved no exception in this case; it ran thus:—

"P.S.—Cissy Legh, an old friend of yours, whom I *think* I have heard you say you *admire*, is staying in our neighbourhood, and is coming on to us on Christmas Eve. Let me *hope* this intelligence may be an additional *inducement* to you to pay us a visit."

'Additional inducement! I should rather think it was, indeed! Charming Cissy Legh! the girl of all others who had played havoc with my heart the whole of the London season. Like the volatile Bob Sackett in the play, the more and more I saw her the more and more I loved her; so much so, indeed, that when the last time I beheld her (I was riding by her side in the Row)

she said to me, "Good-bye, Captain Talbot, I trust we shall meet again soon," and put out her neatly gloved little hand for me to shake, I could stand it no longer, and was on the point of giving vent to my long-pent-up feeling, and offering her my hand and heart, when up trotted her dreadful old guardian, Major Bolder, on his great, lumbering roan cob, with "Cissy, my dear, we must be getting back to luncheon." So I had to shuffle off, feeling very foolish, and looking so, no doubt. And now we were destined to meet again. Dear, good Mrs. Waverly! I believe it was all your doing bringing us together once more.

'I need scarcely tell you that I scribbled off a note at once to Blackgrove Park, saying how delighted I should be, &c. &c., and very soon after might have been seen in close confab with my master of the horse, giving him marching orders, for I was going to take Mrs. Waverly at her word, and accordingly four horses and a hack were under orders to accompany me on my Christmas visit. The fifth day from the receipt of Mrs. Waverly's letter of invitation, then, saw me whirling along in an express train *en route* to Blackgrove, where I duly arrived just in time to dress for dinner. How cheery and bright it all looked after the cold journey! They were all sitting in the entrance-hall round a huge log-fire when I arrived. I can see them now. Tom Waverly, in his red coat (for he had been hunting); Mrs. Tom, in brown velvet, looking handsomer than ever; the children all flushed from a game at romps with papa; and dogs innumerable, ranging in size from the stately retriever to the impudent Scotch terrier; altogether a thoroughly English picture, if ever there was one.

'Greetings over, "Dress for dinner," said the gong. So upstairs we all went, and whilst I was making my toilet I took the opportunity of sending for my groom, whom I had sent on with the horses the day before.

'"The 'osses is all right, Sir, barrin' Tommy (the hack), and he's got a bit of a cough; but he'll be all right in a day or two; and the Dook's 'ouns they're at Sedgeley Cross Roads to-morrer, about ten mile from 'ere or thereabout; a good meet they tell me it is," said my man, all of a breath.

'"Very good," I replied; "take on Blackbird, and I'll ride Blazeaway quietly to the meet." That arrangement concluded,

I put a finishing touch to my white tie, and, flat candlestick in hand, descended to the drawing-room, wondering on the way whether I should see anything of the fair Cissy at the cross-roads on the following day. I was soon put out of suspense as to that, for Mrs. Waverly informed me as I was taking her into dinner that I was sure to see Cissy Legh on the morrow, the people she was staying with being great hunting people, who never missed a meet by any chance. More than that, she herself had seen Cissy only yesterday, and had told her of my intention of paying Blackgrove a visit, and she seemed *so* pleased. And dear Mrs. Waverly looked slily at me as she settled herself down in her place, as much as to say "There! see what *I've* done for you, Sir!' What match-makers women are! I thought to myself.

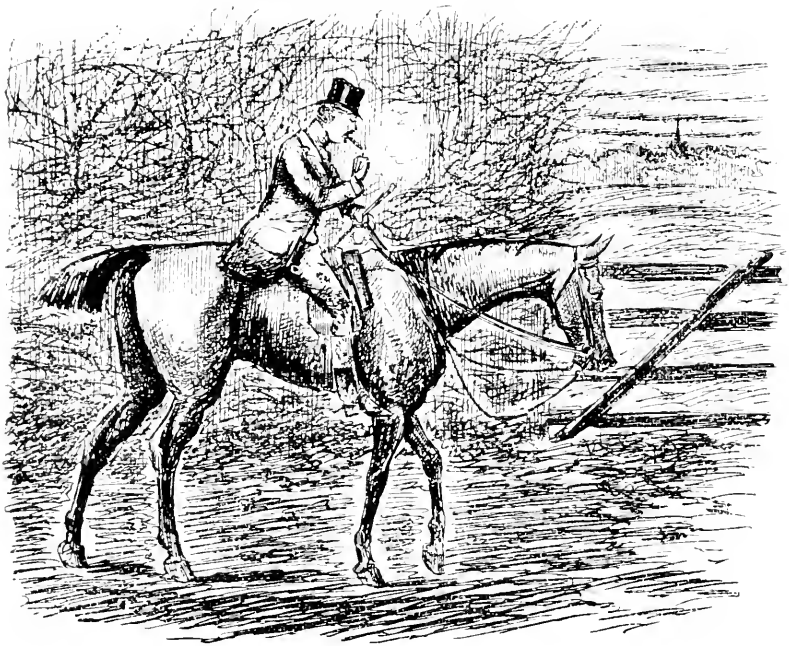
'"Eight o'clock, Sir," says the voice of my servant, waking me out of a sound sleep, the morning after my arrival. "Lovely morning, Sir," adds he, drawing up the blind, hang him! by way of adding force to his remark; by so doing letting in the sun, which streaming in, sets me winking and blinking like an owl. "And the Squire, hearing the hack's amiss, Sir, says you're to 'ave one of his: so William's taken on both the 'osses, Sir." Oh! that's all right, I thought to myself; I can have another nap now, for I can cut along at best pace on Waverly's hack. "Very well, Robert, you can go now; I'll ring when I want you." (Exit Robert.) And now for a twenty minutes' snooze—*only* twenty minutes! No sooner said than done; in two seconds I was once more in the land of dreams.

'Rap, rap, rap! "Come in." It's Robert again. "I thought I'd better come up again, Sir, as you didn't ring. It's ten o'clock, Sir; the family's all down at breakfast, Sir, and the Squire told me himself to tell you you'd be hawful late for the meet if you wasn't quick."

'Ten o'clock! and the hounds meet at eleven. Good gracious! who would have thought it? That's the worst of me, I always was so frightfully lazy. You remember, old fellow, how I used to hate seven-o'clock school at Eton, don't you? So did you, if it comes to that. My father even used to go the length of prophesying that I should finish up a wasted life by being too late for my own funeral. Well, here was I, on the very morning of all

see page 189

others that I should not be, frightfully late. Getting into boots and breeches, too, is not like putting on ordinary garments, as every hunting-man knows. With all my hurrying up, then, it was twenty-five minutes to eleven ere I clanked downstairs. Tom Waverly, who was not going to hunt, having, energetic "beak" as he was, to attend the magistrates' meeting, was just finishing breakfast as I arrived. Mrs. Tom poured me out a cup of coffee; to swallow that and bolt a slice of ham was the



TEMPUS ADIRE DOMUM.

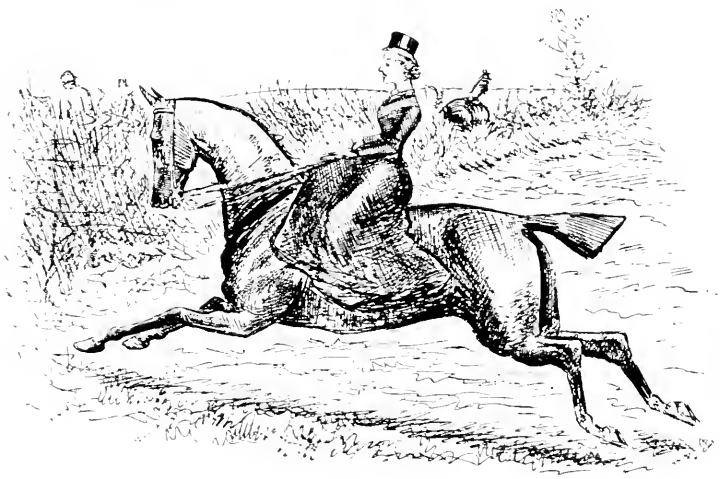
work of a minute, and another saw me in the saddle and off down the avenue at a gallop on Tom Waverly's best hack. As luck would have it, I had been over the ground before, so that there was no need for inquiry. It was a lovely morning, with a slight, very slight, touch of frost in the air. Tom's hack, who was as near thoroughbred as could be, laid herself down to her work, like the good one she was, and we literally flew over the ground. Tom had told me to make free use of her, and I took him at his word. At last, at the foot of a steep hill, I took a pull at the good little mare, and just at that moment a horseman

on a grey, leading another horse, suddenly appeared on the top of it. By Jove! it was my own man with the horses. What a bit of luck! Directly he saw me he began hallooing like mad. The mare was set going again, and in another minute I was by his side.

'The Dook was late, he told me, and the hounds were drawin' towards me. So he had trotted on to see if he could see me, and I might be in time now if I was quick. Blackberry Dean, which they were going to draw first, was only a mile and a half off—not quite so much, perhaps; "and I can leave the Squire's mare at the farmhouse yonder, Sir." In another second I was on the redoubtable Blazeaway, and telling my groom to follow on as soon as he could, galloped off to Blackberry Dean as hard as ever my horse could lay his legs to the ground. Not a soul was in sight as I reached it, and as I pulled up to listen for a moment not a sound could I hear. Hark! was not that a horn? If it was though it was a very long way off; not *in* the wood, I don't believe. It was no good waiting any longer. So I turned into the Dean and rattled down the muddy ride as hard as I could split. At last I met an ancient woodcutter. "Where are the hounds, my man?" said I pulling up. "The 'ounds! Why fur enuff 'orf by this time. Direckly a'most they entered the covert, the fox he were away at t'other end. *Sich* a big 'un, tew! Then he got 'eaded back he did, by some o' the rid coats. Deary me! 'ow the Dook did cuss and swear! And then he took and run a ring like round the wood and out at the corner agin, and then he got fair away, and the 'ounds arter 'im like Billy O. And you'll 'ave to look sharp if you wants to ketch 'em up, master; and," wound up the simple rustic, "he *wor* a big 'un, he wor; the biggest I hever see a'most."

'I was done, that was certain. However, it was no use turning back, so I galloped on to the end of the ride, and through the bridle-gate leading out of the wood. As I emerged I found a gamekeeper, sundry nondescript-looking parties, and a farmer's boy or two, all looking on at something going on in the valley beneath (I forgot to mention that the Dean lay on the top of a hill). What that something was turned out precisely what I thought it would be, viz., a pack of hounds running full cry, at a pace that looked uncommon like killing, over as fine a

grass country as ever was seen; and in the front rank, going like a bird, was a lady on a chestnut horse, whom I could almost swear was none other than the charming Cissy Legh. I wonder who the fellow who's piloting her is? thought I, gnashing my teeth with envy.



CISSY LEGH.

'There was only a choice of two things, either to go home or to ride the line on the off chance—a very off chance—of catching them up. I chose the latter, and proceeded to set Blazeaway going without further loss of time. That sporting animal seemed as much annoyed as I was, and jumped the first few fences considerably bigger than he need have done. The pace we went at very soon brought us up to the stragglers—Major Muffin, whose mare had cast a shoe; Spriggs, the horse-dealer, who had broken his bridle—(accidentally, of course), and several more, all with some sort of an excuse. On we went galloping and jumping, jumping and galloping, and never seeming to get nearer the hounds. At last they checked. Come on, Blazeaway! now's our time, old horse! We were two fields to the good in no time, and just as I was congratulating myself that I might possibly see the end of it, down we came, *sich* a buster! a stiff binder in the fence having failed to give way, and rolled us over. Blazeaway got up, looking stupid; so did I, and as I climbed into the saddle again I had the satisfaction of seeing the hounds take up the scent once more and go off again at score. A series of

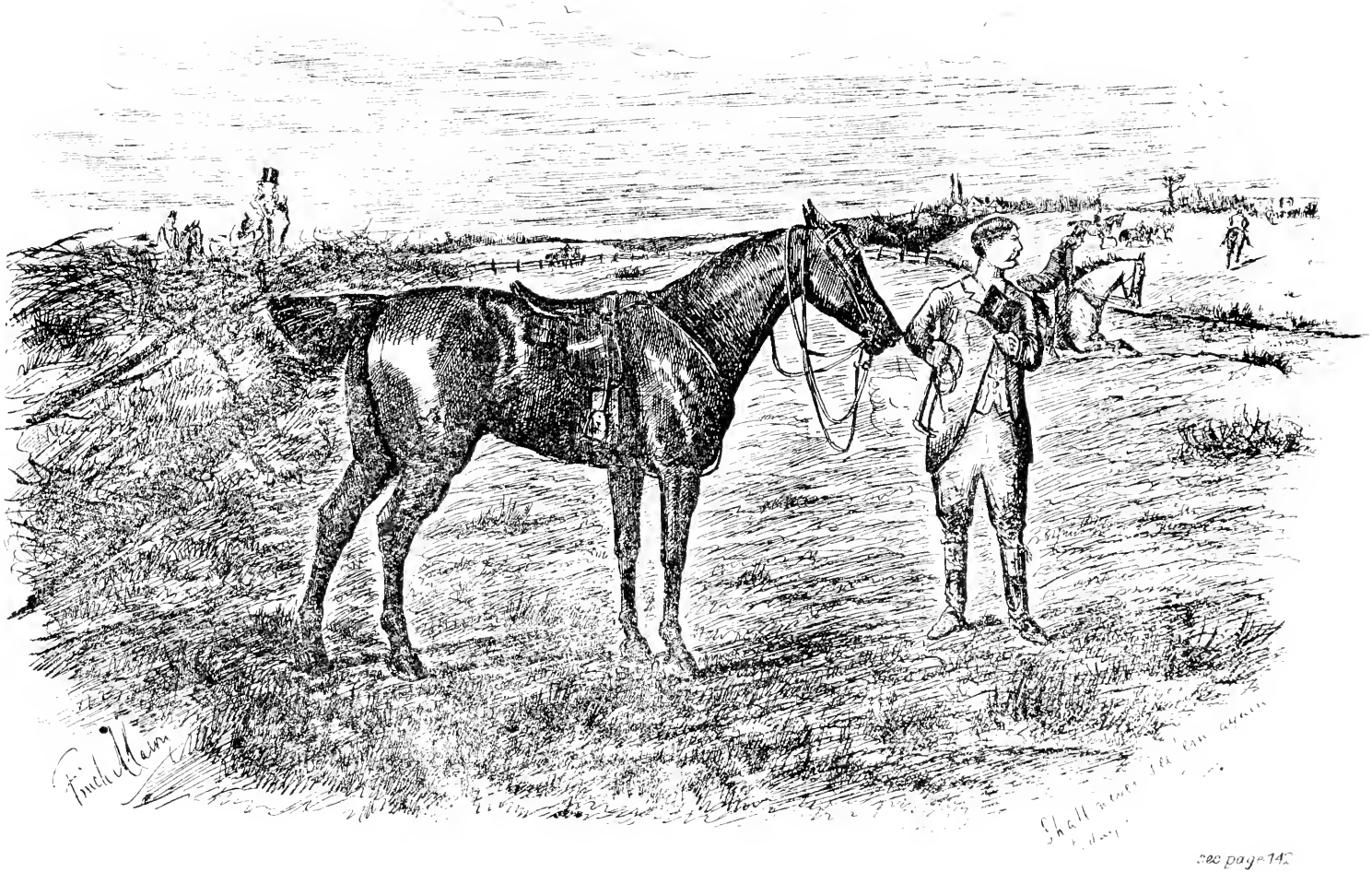
halloos from a rustic minding sheep on a distant hill denotes that he either sees or has seen the hunted fox; it will very soon be "Who hoop!" and my fun is evidently over for the day, thought I; so, without more ado, I turned disconsolately into the road and jogged on, on my now beaten horse. I had not gone far when a halloo behind us made my tired horse prick up his ears and me turn round. It was none other than my groom, who had turned up in miraculous fashion from goodness knows where. I mounted his fresh horse and went on ahead, and by-and-by, in the middle of the road, came across a sporting baker, standing up in his cart in a great state of excitement about something—"They've killed over yonder," quoth he, pointing to the right. "The fox crossed the road just in front o' my pony, and if I hain't a pulled up precious sharp, blowed if I shouldn't a druv' hover 'im, and that *would* a' bin a rum go, wouldn't it?"

'Leaving the excited baker, I opened the nearest gate, and jumping a couple of fences, found myself at last in the same field with the hounds. They had just broken up the fox, having killed in the open after a capital run; and now was going on such munching of sandwiches and drinking of sherry, such laughing and chaffing, and grumbling and smoking, as never was.

'And now, where is Miss Cissy? thought I. At last I caught sight of her, sitting on the chestnut horse I knew so well, away from the crowd, and apparently engaged in a most interesting conversation with a good-looking man in scarlet. Brute! how I hated him at the moment! I rode towards them—they heard me not—and as I approached I overheard *her* say, "You have made me *so* happy, Charlie, you can't think."

'"Have I?" said the good-looking one, coolly. "So glad!" And so saying he lit a cigar and honoured me with a stare, as much as to say, "Who the deuce are you, I wonder?" At this juncture Miss Cissy turned round for the first time and saw me. She blushed—no wonder, I thought—perfidious girl!

'"Why, Mr. Talbot, where *have* you sprung from? I looked everywhere for you at the meet. And you've had a fall, too! Oh, I hope you're not hurt!" said the fair damsel, looking, or rather *trying* to look, very much concerned. "But let me introduce you; my cousin, Captain Bertram—Mr. Talbot."



see page 142

'The Captain and I bowed and exchanged mutual glances of mistrust; a little more desultory conversation between the three, then Miss announces her intention of going home with Cousin Charlie, as she calls him, for an escort; so, wishing me good-bye, the pair rode off. The Duke and his hounds moved off to draw for another fox; but I was too disgusted to go along with them, and lighting a cigar, I turned my horse's head homewards.

'That extra half hour in bed had done me, of course. Cissy had ridden like a bird and captivated the Captain. The Captain had piloted Cissy to admiration and had captivated *her*, and he had struck whilst the iron was hot, and had proposed on the spot—I could see it all. At this juncture my horse shied at a wheelbarrow, so in a rage I gave him a hearty cropper for his pains, and hurried along home best pace.

* * * * * * *

'"Oh, there's some mistake, I feel *sure* there is. Now *do* oblige me, Mr. Talbot; you and I are *such* old friends, you know. Please don't go away; wait until after Christmas, at all events. Cissy will be here to-morrow, and I'll have it out with her." Thus Mrs. Waverly, to whom I had confided my troubles.

'The following evening Miss Cissy arrived. I took Mrs. Larkyboy, about the most flirtatious widow I ever came across, into dinner, and gave Cissy the cold shoulder all the evening. Cissy looked hurt.

'Christmas Day arrived and Miss Cissy made her appearance in the breakfast-room, looking, I thought, more bewitching than ever. "Merry Christmas everybody," said she; "though I can't say I think *you* look particularly merry, Mr. Talbot," she added, archly, as I responded to her greeting in a melancholy manner.

'We all went to church afterwards, and I sat next to Cissy, who shared her hymn-book with me. I had no idea she had such a sweet voice. Before the end of the service I had made up my mind that I should never love another, and accordingly determined within myself to start for the Antipodes the following day. Church over, we walk home; Cissy and I suddenly finding each other, goodness knows how, all by ourselves, in a remote part of the pleasure-grounds.

'"By the way," said I, in an off-hand manner, after a long silence, "I quite forgot, Miss Legh, to congratulate you."

'"Congratulate *me*, Mr. Talbot! On what, pray?"

'"What! are you not engaged to Captain Bertram? I think I was rather *de trop*, was I not, when I rode up rather abruptly the other day?"

'"Good gracious me! oh, this is too much!" and the fair Cissy threw herself down on a rustic seat and laughed immoderately.

'"Why, what a goose you are, Mr. Talbot! Charlie Bertram is engaged to my sister (you've never met her, I think), and he was telling me all about it when you came up."

'In another second I was by her side and telling her all.

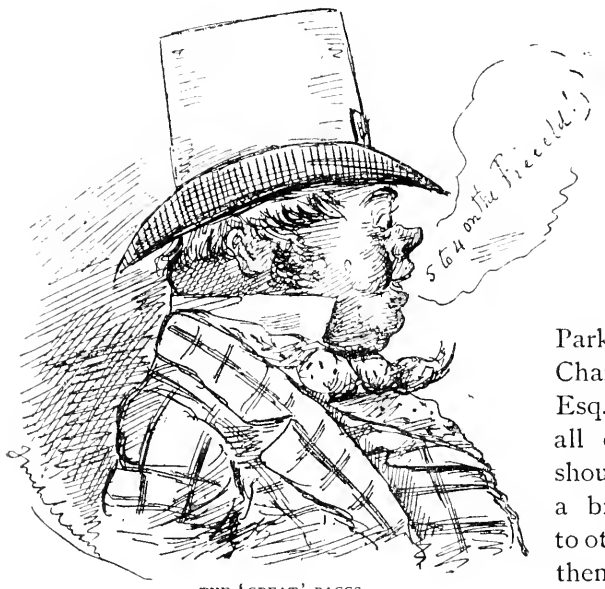
'"And so you've actually loved me all this long time, have you?" said the fair Cissy, after a pause. "Well, you really deserve *some* reward, if only for your constancy. Now tell me, Mr. Talbot—well then, Jack—has anybody given you a Christmas-box yet, Sir?" "No." "Well then, let me give you one," and Cissy, putting both her hands on my shoulders, gave me a bewitching kiss. "There, Jack, I'm your Christmas-box; and now, Sir, take me into luncheon directly."

'So you see,' said Jack, 'I didn't go to the Antipodes after all, for Cissy and I were married before Easter; and I think you'll agree with me, old fellow, that I have *some* cause for being more than partial to the festive season ever since I received that unexpected Christmas-box three years ago. And now, if you won't smoke any more we'll go to roost.'

AN UNEXPECTED CHRISTMAS-BOX

THE NEW NEIGHBOUR.

A Tale of the Turf.



THE 'GREAT' BAGGS.

IT is a blazing hot Sunday in August, and the whole of the family belonging to Pattycake Park, the abode of Charles Challinor, Esq., J.P., are, as all decent people should be, setting a bright example to others, and doing themselves good at the same time (at least, we trust so), by stewing and simmering away for two mortal hours in the stuffy little village church, situated about three-quarters of a mile from the Park gates. Stay! When we say the *whole* of the family, we make a mistake. We should by rights have added, with '*one* exception.' Which exception, in the shape of a good-looking young fellow of about twenty, usually alluded to by his father, when speaking of him, as that 'scamp of mine;' by his fond mother, as that 'poor darling;' by his sisters, 'that wicked boy;' by the neighbours, 'that good-for-nothing young fellow;' and by the servants, 'Master George;' is now to be seen comfortably seated in a rustic chair, well placed, with great judgment, under a huge lime-tree on the lawn, surrounded by all the family bow-wows. A cigar is in his mouth, that instructive and amusing book, *Mr. Sponge's*

Sporting Tour, is in his hand, a soda-water glass, half full of something of a drinkable nature, with a straw in it, is on the grass at his side, and his light-coloured shooting-jacket, which is thrown open, discovers the fact that he has no waistcoat on; altogether presenting a sight quite cooling to look at this hot day.

A whimper from Joe, the fox-terrier, followed by a general exodus of the whole pack of dogs from his side, suddenly arouses him from a gentle snooze in which he is indulging; and lazily turning his head, he is aware of the approach of his family, who are to be seen slowly ascending the steep hill of the park. 'Ah! here they come!' mutters he: 'terribly hot they look too, poor things!' And vacating his chair and throwing the end of his now smoked-out cigar away, he saunters languidly as far as the railings, over which he leans and awaits their arrival!

'Well, my darling boy! and how is your poor head now?' exclaims his fond mother, embracing young Hopeful over the railings. 'You really must *not* read so late at night, dear' (he was supposed to be reading for *something*, but for *what*, no one could clearly make out). 'You'll have brain fever if you do.'

'Read, indeed! You need not alarm yourself on *that* score, my dear,' observed Challinor *père*, a portly gentleman of some threescore years, who had come up just in time to hear his better half's remark, and was now puffing like a grampus with the heat, and mopping his face with a large silk handkerchief. 'Read, indeed! Tell him not to drink so much brandy and soda of a night, and smoke so many cigars, and then, perhaps, he won't have quite so many headaches! Sunday, too, seems a *particularly* headachy day with you, George,' went on the old gentleman, ironically. 'Poor, delicate creature! you really ought to go to the sea for a bit. Well, it's your loss, not mine, that's one consolation; you missed a most excellent sermon to-day, I can tell you.'

'Yes, and you missed something else, you wicked, good-for-nothing boy!' said Miss Mary Challinor, George's eldest sister. What should you say if I told you Cissy Larkins was there in the Tomlinsons' pew—eh, sir? *Now* are not you sorry?'

'No, by Jove! was she though?' exclaimed the youth, brightening up, and something very like a blush suffusing his

manly features. 'I say, Polly, are you going to church this afternoon? I'll come with you, if you are.'

'Oh! and you missed something else, George,' now chimed in his youngest sister, Lucy. 'The new people who've just bought Shrublands were there!'

'And what were *they* like?' said her brother. 'The same sort of article we've such a lot of about here, I'll bet. "Something in the City," I s'pose—eh? What are their names, Loo?'

'It's an old gentleman and an only daughter. *He* looks highly *respectable*'—['Something in the City: I told you so,' from George]—'and she is rather *pretty*, and they *say* he is *awfully* rich, and nobody knows *what* he is; but Mrs. Cackleton *thinks* he is connected with India or somewhere, because you know, George, her pew is next his (his name's "Baggs;" isn't it an ugly name, George?); and the old gentleman went to sleep during the sermon, and Mrs. Cackleton heard him say during his nap, quite distinctly, "Ten monkeys on the field"—and you *know* what a clever woman she is, George—so she put two and two together, and she says no doubt in his sleep he was dreaming of the country where he has made all his money; because, of course, there are no monkeys in England, so it must be somewhere abroad—mustn't it, George?' wound up the excited Miss Lucy, who had come out with her information all in a breath.

'Ah! I'm afraid he don't sound much like a sporting character. It's really shocking the way this part of the country is degenerating,' sighed her brother in reply.

'A man, Sir, who has amassed a fortune by his own industry and shrewdness is, in *my* opinion, a man to be looked up to, Sir,' here remarked George's papa, in his sternest and most magisterial manner. 'Mr.—hem—Baggs is, no doubt, a most worthy person, and—ha, hum—doubtless much thought of in the City. And, my dear, you had better call at Shrublands as soon as you can.' And the worthy Squire, darting an indignant look at his reprobate son, turned on his heel and led the way to the house and the orthodox Sunday roast beef.

When young Squire George remarked that the country round about was degenerating, he was not very wide of the mark. Pattycake Park, the estate of the Challinors, is pleasantly situated in the county of Featherbedshire, and is only some two-

and-twenty miles from Hyde Park Corner. Some thirty or forty years ago that particular part of the county was as countrified and sporting a locality as need be; but the enterprising railways very quickly changed all that, and as if one line was not enough, down came a rival, in the shape of the great Smashem and Crumpleemup; and as that well-known company's line joined the underground railway when it got to London, the part of Featherbedshire through which it ran naturally held out unusual advantages to City gents fond of ruralising, of which they were not slow to take advantage. The result being that, first one country gentleman near the line sold his place for a fancy price, then another, until, at last, nearly all the old lot were gone, and quite a new colony established. And very soon, about the only idle people to be seen about in the daytime in those parts were Mr. Challinor and his son George, the former of whom was generally to be beheld on a fine day digging up the thistles on the estate with his spud in a desultory manner; and the latter amusing himself in the pursuit of sport in whatever manner it offered itself to him: he was not particular what, apparently, so long as it was sport of some sort. Fox-hunting and rat-catching, pheasant-shooting and bat-folding—nothing came amiss to him.

As we have just mentioned, Featherbedshire had decidedly fallen off in quality since the advent of the railways, and it had certainly still more deteriorated in the matter of sport,—a circumstance regetted by no one more than our young friend, George Challinor. Now, if there was one amusement that that young Nimrod favoured more than another, it was a race-meeting. Riding over to Ascot one fine day, when he was a festive boy at Eton (for which he and his companions were very properly swished and turned down the following morning), inoculated him with the fever. Slow old Featherbedshire only sported one race-meeting in the whole of the year, and that only lasted one day, and was of only a plating description; so Master George, as he read *Bell's Life* (which he and the butler took in between them) in bed on a Sunday morning, would read with envy the accounts of the different big meetings all over the country, and wish within himself that he could persuade the governor to sell the Park, as so many of his neighbours had theirs, and migrate to a more sporting part of the world. Not only was the sport indifferent in those parts,

but there was almost a total absence of sportsmen ; and though there were plenty amongst the smart young City gents who went up to town every morning by the 'Smashem and Crumple-emup,' who would converse very freely on the doings of the Stock Exchange, and who, in all probability, were not at all averse, when they thought they were on a good thing, to investing a few hundreds or thousands, as the case might be—in 'Egyptians' say (which, of course, was not *gambling !* Oh, dear, no !), yet they were men who, if you mentioned such a thing as a racehorse to them, would shudder at the bare mention of such an instrument of gambling; and when Master George boasted to a carriage full of them one evening that he had not only been to the Oaks the day before, but had won the cheerful sum of a 'pony' as the result of it, it was generally agreed by all these good young men that the cheery young Squire was a person to be avoided, as not by any means one of themselves. No wonder, then, that our young friend longed for a sportsman of some sort to arrive in those parts ; some one with whom he could not only shoot partridges and pheasants, but could discuss the prospects of the favourite for next year's Derby ; some veteran, perhaps, who would, over his after-dinner glass of wine, come out with anecdotes of John Scott and Sir Tatton Sykes, and prattle with enthusiasm of the glorious days of Beeswing, Lanercost, and Co., all of whom George had read about in the Druid's delightful books; varying the conversation perhaps with a few reminiscences of Moulsey Hunt and No Man's Land, and the brave deeds performed on those well-known battlefields by Owen Swift, and Ben Caunt, and other equally celebrated heroes. His parent, too, was not quite so florid in his conversation as his son could have wished ; for though the worthy old gentleman was a cheery companion enough over a nocturnal cigar, he was apt to get crusty and disagreeable if George talked 'sport' too much ; and at the bare mention of horseracing the old gentleman would shut up 'like a telescope,' as his son said.

He had cherished a remote sort of hope that the new arrival at Shrublands might turn out a Nimrod in some form or another, and he actually took the trouble to go to church one Sunday morning expressly to have a good look at the unconscious Mr. Baggs, who little knew the honour that was being accorded him ; and very much disappointed he was at the result of his inspec-

tion; and with some reason, for it must be admitted that a more 'unsporting' looking old buffer than Mr. B., as he stood up in his pew on his arrival in church counting ten in his hat, could not well be imagined..

It was the third week in September, and there might have been seen one fine afternoon, of what he called an 'off' day—meaning, that he was giving the partridges a rest—our friend the young Squire riding along, *not* thinking of nothing at all, like Dibdin's celebrated Waterman, for he was just debating within himself on which of his father's farms he would commence his shooting operations the next day. He had ridden over to the neighbouring town of Slumborough on the Squire's favourite cob to order some cartridges, and having jumped a couple of stiles, to that sedate animal's intense disgust, and having in so doing put the beast in no end of a lather, as he jocularly remarked to himself, he was now walking him home quietly, so as to bring him back cool; for his parent, as he well knew, would be furious if he thought his pet had been bucketed unnecessarily. He had just opened a little bridle-gate on the Baggs' property, through which he meditated taking a short cut home, when he was suddenly brought to by a loud 'Halloo!' The field he had just entered was a clover-field, and standing in the middle of it with a gun in his hand, and accompanied by a keeper and a couple of hobbledehoys, was a stout party, attired in a complete suit of shepherd's plaid, the whole surmounted by a white hat, whom George had little difficulty in recognising as none other than the new owner of Shrublands —the great Mr. Baggs himself.

'Halloo!' shouted that worthy man again—for it was his voice that George had heard—waving at the same time a huge crimson bandanna as big as a flag.

'Halloo—o—o!' shouted George in his turn, pulling the cob up short and wondering what was the matter.

'Wait a min-nit until I come up to yer,' was now wafted back on the breeze.

'What lungs the old snob's got, to be sure!' said George to himself, with a grin, as a brace of old birds, startled by the noise, came flying over his head—a lovely shot if he had had a gun in his hand.

Mr. Baggs now approached our hero. ''Ow de do, Sir?'

see page 100

said he, holding out a redhot hand for George to shake. 'You'll wonder at my hollerin' at you, I dessay; made as much noise as one o' them fellers in the 'alf-crown ring*—hem, hem, hem' (here Mr. Baggs got very red in the face, and was seized with a violent fit of coughing). 'I beg your pardon, I meant as much noise as one o' them—hem—*crowkeepin'* lads. I've had the plissure of being introdooced to your family, Sir; but I've not yet 'ad the hopportunity of makin' your acquaintance until now: in fact, I've only set eyes on yer once, and that was in church.' (Mr. Baggs once more shook hands.) 'Well, Sir, what I wanted to stop you for was this. I've got a pal—hem, hem—*friend*, I should say a-comin' down from town to-night, and I want to get a brace o' birds for second course, and 'ere 'ave I bin the 'ole o' the bloomin'—hem, hem—I beg your pardon for the slip—blessed day, 'ammerin' away at 'em, and I *can't* 'it 'em, dam——hem, hem—blessed if I can! Now, I've heard say that you can shoot uncommon. Will you, like a good feller, get 'orf your 'ack—reminds me of one I rode at Newm——hem, hem—' (here Mr. Baggs' face was again suffused with blushes)—''Ampstead—when I used to live there once—and take my gun and shoot me a brace or two? I'd take it kindly if you will; and if you'll excoose ceremony and come in afterwards and pick a bit with me and my pal—friend, I mean—you'll do me proud, Sir.' And Mr. Baggs, having thus delivered himself, wiped his face with the crimson banner he called a handkerchief, and paused for a reply.

George was a man of few words, and in the present instance did not waste time by using any. Indeed, Mr. Baggs had scarcely finished speaking before George was off the pony's back.

'Jump up, governor,' was all he said. 'You'll find him very quiet. Where's your shooter? Oh, I see; your man's got it.' And before Mr. Baggs could recover himself, the young Squire was a hundred yards off, striding away across the clover to where Mr. B. had left his men and his gun.

'Well, now,' said that gentleman to himself, '*that's* what I call a smart feller, that is. I wonder if he could ride a stipple-chase—damned if——oh, Lord, I'm at it again!' ejaculated Mr. Baggs, slapping his mouth as he spoke. 'I shall be blown upon

* Mr. B. alluded accidentally here to the cheap betting-ring at Newmarket.

afore long, I *know* I shall, if I can't keep my cussed tongue quiet. They take me for a West Indian merchant down here, I'm told, bless their innocent 'arts. What *would* they say if they only knew? *I'll take three to one!*' he suddenly shouted at the top of his voice, as he saw in the distance a bird rise in front of George—a long shot—who killed it, however, handsomely. 'Thought I was at Shepherd's Bush takin' the odds, blowed if I didn't. I *can't* keep it up much longer. I'm bound to split on myself one of these days, I know I am!' exclaimed poor Mr. Baggs, in great tribulation and anguish of mind. 'There he goes again!—a brace right and left! The dog's got 'em all right too. He's a fine feller, that is! Worth a dozen o' them young stuck-up dogs I went up to town in the train with last Monday!'

In half-an-hour's time that ardent sportsman George returned to the grateful Mr. Baggs with four brace of birds and a hare. That gentleman was delighted. Would he come and dine? George was very sorry, but he couldn't. They had got a dinner-party on at home, or he'd have been happy. The fact was, his friend Cissy Larkins was to be there, or George would have accepted Mr. Baggs' invitation.

Well, any other night he pleased. Only got to say he was coming. 'I am often away doorin' the week,' said Mr. B. 'We 'ard-worked City men, you know, must stick to work—eh? But Sunday you'll always find me. And whenever you're out a shootin' and drive your birds on to my ground, foller 'em up. Mind you do, now. Where there's ceremony there's no friendship, recollect.' With which parting injunction Mr. Baggs shook hands most cordially with his new acquaintance, as he bid him good-day and marched off home followed by his myrmidons.

'Well,' said George, as looking back he saw the cheerful Mr. Baggs waving his crimson flag to him in the distance, in token of good fellowship, 'that's just about the rummest old cove I ever met in my life. What the doose is he? I wonder. I don't believe he's a City gent a bit—hanged if I do! Never mind, he don't seem half a bad sort, and I'll go over and dine with him one of these fine nights, see if I don't.' And having lit a cigar George cantered off home, much pleased with his afternoon's work.

It was not more than a week after the meeting just men-

tioned between George and the new owner of Shrublands before the former found himself, by special invitation, with his legs—to use that hospitable person's expression—under Mr. Baggs' mahogany, and a very excellent dinner he got. Turtle from the famous hostelry in Leadenhall Street, venison from Lord This, grouse from the Marquis of That. George thought better than ever of his host; and when pretty little Miss Baggs retired to her drawing-room, and her father and George proceeded to discuss just about the very best bottle of claret that young gentleman had ever drank, he again regretted more than ever that his worthy host was not a sportsman. As it was, however, George, who knew how many beans made five as well as any one, could not help thinking that the old gentleman was not quite so ignorant as he pretended to be concerning sports of the field; for happening in course of conversation to mention the Cesarewitch, he was *rather* surprised to hear Mr. B. promptly talk of it as the 'Siezerwitch;' and still more so when that worthy struck himself a slap on the mouth, with the remark, *sotto voce*, of 'At it again! *Can't* you be quiet, stoopid?' Immediately afterwards he asked George whereabouts Newmarket was, and if it was not the place where they made all the sausages. The young Squire once more put him down as a greenhorn.

George was not by any means the only one to whom Mr. Baggs was a mystery. 'The City gents,' as George called them, of whom there was such a strong covey in that part, soon began to look askance at poor Mr. Baggs, for not only did not one of them know him even by sight, but on inquiry it turned out that no one of that name was known on ''Change' at all. The *Post-office Directory* was consulted, but to no purpose. Baggs's there were certainly, but no one of the slightest importance. They even tried to pump little Miss Baggs through their wives and daughters, but here again they were foiled; for little Miss B. declared she had no idea where pa's office was. At last, in despair, they settled it amongst themselves that Mr. Baggs must be a sleeping partner in some flourishing concern; and as about this period the object of their curiosity came down with a cheque for 50*l.* towards a new organ for the church, when the utmost any of them had given to it was a five-pound note, they one and all agreed that Mr. Baggs was a *most* respectable, worthy man,

and, what was better still in their eyes, *very rich*, and decided that for the future no more inquiries were necessary, but that he was to be taken on trust.

It was for George to solve the mystery.

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It is the Cesarewitch Day at Newmarket, and the little Cambridgeshire town, as the sporting reporters love to call it—though, as a matter of fact, they are wrong, as Suffolk has an equal right to it—is crowded with sportsmen of every degree. All sorts and conditions of men with a vengeance. Let us join the crowd in front of the Rooms, and see who's who. First and foremost our gaze falls on the figure of a sportsman familiar to all racegoers. Find me the men who don't know the 'Mate' by sight, if you can. Not quite so slim, perhaps, as when he raced up the heights of the Alma with a brother-officer and got shot in the neck for his pains, or when he beat the rod in pickle in the shape of a fleet-footed miner (whom they had '*readied*' for him) whilst on a visit to the country-house of a certain noble sportsman hailing from the Principality; but still a man you would rather drink with than fight with any day in the week. We'll be bound, as he gets on his hack this morning to go on the Heath he misses that faithful old Crimean comrade, his favourite old grey horse, as well known by sight to frequenters of Newmarket as his master. But away with melancholy—life's too short! And in another second jolly Sir John's manly countenance is as cheerful-looking as ever, as he exchanges chaff with his friend, the honourable Member for North Lincoln. Sir Frederick Johnstone and his partner, Lord Alington, emerge from the Rooms in close confab together. The chocolate and yellow sleeves will probably make the 'genii of the Ring' shake their heads a bit before the day is out.

See, the great Steel takes off his hat, with a bow, to Sir George Chetwynd, who in turn takes off his to *Mr.* Manton, who, attired in a dress just a trifle darker than her own colours, drives swiftly by at the moment.

The astute master of Bedford Cottage now rides by, with the Duke of Beaufort on one side and his boyish-looking trainer on the other. Still juvenile looks the Captain, though not so strong and active—thanks to the gout—as on the day when he ran a

Now then Old Tun out o the way!
A Sketch at the top o the town
Sporting members of the Varsity.
I've backed Archess mount.
ASHLEY'S FULLY
I am entirely with you Brother Bustle and I'll tell you what I'll bet you 6 to 4 you dont name the winner of this race.
In my opinion M'Lud there is nothing incompatible with Judicial Dignity in the enjoyment of English Sport!
Newmarket Notions.

see page 155

hundred yards (on the Cambridge road, if we remember rightly), against another gallant Captain, easily beating the latter—good man as he was.

Lord Freddy, with his head on one side like a parrot, and looking just about as cunning as one, is holding cheerful converse with the popular and volatile proprietor of that journal beloved of mashers, to wit, the *Pink 'un;* whilst 'Bras de Fer,' whom little Tommy Brown from town has just pointed out to a friend as the Duke of Something—he forgets the title for the moment—is just putting his elaborately-got-up person into a brougham, in which is already seated the mighty 'Pavo.'

'Who's that old bloke on the cob?' we overhear a rough-looking article, in a battered and a dilapidated ulster, ask a companion as forbidding to the eye as himself.

'Wot! Don't yer remimber?' (whisper, whisper, whisper) answers, in a tone of much contempt, his friend.

'Well! blimy, if I should a-knowed 'im *without his wig and gown!*' is the rejoinder.

And as the pretty pair slink away we look up, and are aware of the approach of an elderly gentleman of decidedly sporting appearance, mounted on a good-looking pony, whom we are prompt to recognise as Sir Henry Hawkins; whilst by his side, like himself evidently delighted at the change from the foul air of the law-courts to the fresh breeze on the famous Heath, rides that horse-loving lawyer, Mr. Russell, Q.C.

And now, who is this coming out of the yard of the 'White Hart,' in company of two other young men, whose rather loud attire and splashed boots suggest the notion that they are a pair of sporting undergraduates ridden over from Cambridge? Can it be our young friend George? It is; and no other. He is staying at the 'Bull' at Cambridge, and has ridden over with two young friends from Trinity. The trio have just partaken of a copious luncheon, with oceans of champagne, at the 'White Hart.' And having each stuck a huge cigar in his mouth, and wound up with a soda-and-brandy a-piece, are quite prepared to ride over anybody, for which amiable purpose they are now in quest of their respective hacks.

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They are getting ready for the great race of the day. Jockeys

on their hacks, with their saddles strapped to their backs, are galloping down towards the ditch as hard as ever they can go. One by one, horses, with their pilots up, emerge from the Birdcage, each surrounded by a crowd of admirers, both male and female. The competitors have all gone down—everybody has his raceglass out, eagerly watching for the fall of the flag, when our young friend George Challinor, in a frantic state of excitement, comes galloping up from the direction of the starting-post, as hard as ever his hack can lay legs to the ground. He pulls up as he spies his companions, who are busy consuming champagne at a carriage filled with some more juvenile sportsmen from Cambridge.

'Come on, ole f'ler, and have a drink,' shouts one, as he approaches.

'Drink be blowed!' is his polite reply. 'I say, Tommy, where's a ready-money booky? I've just been down to the stables behind the ditch and seen Billy Button, and he does look *so* fit I *must* go and have a bit on him. I wish I hadn't backed the favourite.'

'Oh, cut away to that old cove over there in the red hat and the suit like a chessboard; we've all got our money on with him: he's all right, I've known him for *years*,' answered Tommy, a youth of about George's age, pointing to a little group in the distance, between where they were and the back of the Stand.

Away galloped George to the spot, and then, pulling out five sovereigns, all the money he had left, he handed it with some difficulty, owing to the pressure of the crowd, to a stout party, attired in the very loudest attire George had ever seen, who was shouting himself hoarse.

'How much Billy Button? Four to one to *you*, Sir. Twenty pounds to five. Here, put it down,' said the owner of the scarlet hat to his clerk; giving George a ticket. 'Now then, which one for you, master?' said he, turning in a second to some one else. 'Jemmy dy Vergy? Three dollars, Sam. Thank *you*, Sir.' 'Here, three to one on the f-i-e-e-l-d! three to one on the f-i-e-e-l-d! Come on! Who'll back an outsider?'

Meanwhile George sat on his hack in blank amazement; and well he might, for in the stout wearer of the chessboard suit and vermilion hat, who had just laid him twenty pounds to five

against Billy Button for the Cesarewitch, he had recognised the new owner of Shrublands—Mr. Benjamin Baggs.

A shout from the crowd announcing that they are off rouses him from his reverie, and, putting his ticket in his waistcoat pocket, George turns his horse's head and gallops back to the rails, just in time to see Billy Button come away from his horses at the Bushes and win the great race in the commonest of canters.

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On the Sunday afternoon following the race for the Cesarewitch won by Billy Button, the worthy Mr. Baggs, who was what he called 'eatin' grapes in the 'ot 'ouse,' was roused by the sound of a footstep on the gravel path outside. 'Ah! now this is wery kind of yer! 'Ow dy do?' said he, shaking hands with his visitor, who was none other than our friend George. 'This is wery kind of yer. I didn't go to church this mornin', for business has been so brisk all the week'—('You old humbug!' thought his grinning visitor)—'I didn't feel quite up to the mark, so I'm extra glad to see yer. Did you walk, or did you ride your 'ack over? 'Acked it, eh? I'm glad o' that, for you must stop to dinner and ride home afterwards. You must, really; I'll take no denial.'

'I'll stop and dine with all the pleasure in life,' replied George. 'Meanwhile, there's no one near to hear us, is there?' said he, looking round, 'because I want to have a word with you on business.'

'Not a soul,' replied Mr. Baggs, confidently. ''Ave a grape? or pr'aps you'd rather 'ave a cigar? No? Out with it, then.'

'Well, the fact is, Mr. Baggs,' said George, splitting with suppressed laughter, 'I've come over expressly to ask you for that 'ere pony you owe me.'

'Pony!' said the respectable Mr. Baggs. 'Wot's that?'

'Oh! you infernal old humbug! you sly old fox! The West Indian business won't go down any longer—with me, at least. Look at that, you old sinner, and stump up. What a *game* it is! my eye! my eye!' And George, to the amazement of Mr. Baggs, pulled out from his pocket the identical green ticket he had received at Newmarket when he backed Billy Button, handed it to that worthy, and roared with laughter.

'*S-h-h-h,*' said the unabashed Baggs, a broad grin pervading his jolly face. '*S-h-h-h*, or they'll 'ear you in the 'ouse, and

MR. BAGGS IS FOUND OUT.

I don't want to be blown on down in these parts; at least, not if I can 'elp it, and I know you won't split.'

'Split! not I,' said George. 'Here's my hand on that, old chap. I'm quite delighted, on the contrary, to find a sportsman in these parts. But, ha! ha! ha!—you'll excuse me laughing—but it is *such* a lark, I can't help it. You cussed old humbug you!—Ha! ha! ha!'

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That night George, if possible, got a better dinner than usual, and heard enough racing stories from Mr. Baggs to fill a book, had he cared to write one. In honour of the auspicious occasion, too, Mr. B. pulled out some wonderful claret; a present, as he informed George in confidence, from Lord Hardup, in lieu of a bad debt. In fact, it was owing to getting so many similar bad debts in the big ring that the worthy man had taken to the ready-money business. 'A little more bother

pr'aps,' said he, 'but a precious sight more profitable, I can tell you.'

When George came to mount his pony to ride home that night, he found that a thick fog had come on—Shrublands lying close to the river—and in consequence Mr. Baggs (who talked, by the way, decidedly thick) tried hard to persuade his guest (who, we regret to say, was also suffering from a slight impediment in his speech) to go back by way of the road, instead of taking, as he was in the habit of doing, a short cut home by way of the river, which he would have to ford twice *en route*. Not a bit of it! George was as obstinate as a mule.

'I'mallri (hic). Shall go home which way I pleash. So *goori*,' said he. 'Goori! an' pleashant dreams, ole two-to-one-bar-one' (hic).

'*Goori!*' said Mr. Baggs in return, shaking George heartily by the hand, and nearly tumbling on his nose as he let go. '*You won't s-h-plit* (hic) *will you?*' added the worthy man.

'S-h-plit! (hic) *norrabirrofit. Worreryertakemefor?*' replied our sporting young friend, fiercely, as he disappeared from view in the fog.

'S-h-plit!' hiccuped he, with an insane laugh, as he reached the first ford and cocked his legs up to avoid wetting them, nearly tumbling off the cob's back into the river in the effort. '*S-h-plit!* (hic) *norrabirrofit.*'

And he didn't.

A HEAVY BETTOR.

'A TERRIBLE ACCIDENT.'

THE NEW GUN.

'STORY, God bless you! *I* have none to tell you,' said Uncle Jack, quoting the needy knife-grinder.

'Oh, but you *have*,' replied a chorus of youthful voices.

'But if I have, my boys and girls, I don't know how to tell it. I never told a story in my life. Ask grandpapa there; he'll tell you a much better one than I shall,' once more appealed Uncle Jack.

'Oh! but you *do*; and, besides, we know all grandpapa's stories,' again urged the chorus, returning to the charge with renewed determination.

'Well, well,' said Uncle Jack, heaving a sigh of resignation 'If I must, I must. What shall it be now—Sinbad the Sailor Blue Beard, Robinson Crusoe, Philip Quarll, or what?'

'No, no, *no!*' once more rose up the chorus of voices, this time in anger. 'You're to *make one up*.'

'You're in for it now, Jack,' observed mamma, laughing. 'You'd better tell them, for want of a better, all about the terrible accident that happened at Christmas time years and years ago. We'll have the tea-things cleared away, and then you can begin at once.' So accordingly the bell was rung, the footman appeared, the five-o'clock tea-things were removed, and the family party seated round the big hall fire at Haverly Court settled themselves down all attention for Uncle Jack's story.

''Tis now terwenty y-e-e-rs ago——' commenced Uncle Jack, adopting the manner of a tragedian in a thrilling melodrama at a transpontine theatre.

'Don't be so silly, Uncle Jack!' interrupted Miss Cissy, aged eight.

'Well, then,' said Uncle Jack, 'we'll say a good many years ago—when I was a nice—I won't say good—little boy, having lost both father and mother, I was taken to the home of, and brought up by, my uncle and guardian, my late father's brother. My guardian had an only son, as near as possible my own age, and, his tastes being similar to mine in every way, we were inseparable.

'My cousin Charlie was one of those unselfish boys—I am afraid rather rare now-a-days—who never seemed happy unless somebody shared his pleasures with him. If his father gave him a new pony, I must have the first ride on him. Did our tutor, for some offence or other, deny me the usual half-holiday, Charlie would be miserable, and would steadily refuse to go off on his own devices until I was set free (an event he generally managed to speedily bring about by the winning way he had with him—for our tutor, like every one else about the place, could refuse him nothing).

'In due time we were both of us sent to Eton; and when there, though for prudential reasons my uncle thought proper to send us to different tutors, consequently keeping us rather more apart from one another than we should have been had we both been in the same house, yet we still were the same inseparables we had always been. Things went on in this way until we were both nearly seventeen—Charlie, grown up a fine strapping fellow, and one of the most popular fellows in the school, a favourite both with boys and masters.

'The winter half had come to an end, and once more we found ourselves back again at my uncle's house, ripe and ready for all the many amusements that abound so about Christmas time, more especially in the country. The morning after our arrival my uncle called us both into his sanctum, where he presented us apiece with a double-barrelled gun, each a masterpiece of the mighty Boss. How we gloated over them! How we tried their locks! How we raised them to our shoulders, vowing they came up as handy as if they had been measured for us or we for them! Never were such guns.

'"And now, boys," said my jolly uncle, "the best thing you can do is to go and try 'em, for I shall be busy all the morning, and in the afternoon have got to drive over to ——. We must keep all the coverts quiet until the people come, the day after to-

morrow" (my uncle was going, as he always did, to fill his house for Christmas; and there were fine prospects of high jinks, I can tell you); "so the best thing you can do is to go and ferret the rabbits; there are lots of 'em, and when you've done that go and beat the belt round the park, and pick up a few pheasants. You'll find Stratton, the keeper, in the servants' hall, for I told him to be there at ten o'clock. So, off with you, and don't let me see any more of you until dinner-time."

'Nothing loth, away we rushed to the servants' hall, where, true to my uncle's prophecy, we found the great Mr. Stratton discussing a horn of strong ale, in company with John the footman. Broad were the grins with which he greeted Muster Charles and Muster Jack, as he called us.

'"Well, they *are* bootiful guns," said the worthy man, as we showed him our newly-acquired treasures; "and I 'ope, genelmen, you've brought lots o' straight powder along wi' you this time from Heton. Lor' bless me!" added he, putting Charlie's gun up to his shoulder; "if you miss hanything with this here, Muster Charles, I *shall* be 'shamed on yer, that I shall."

'Old Stratton having thus delivered himself, now proposed a start, the days, as he justly observed, "drorin in" very quick at that season of the year. Away we went then, commencing with a march across the park, during which Charlie opened the campaign with the new gun by killing a wood-pigeon as he flew out of a clump of beeches nearly out of shot, and I knocking over a couple of rabbits in a satisfactory, and, as Stratton remarked, "workmanlike" manner, as they jumped out of the bracken at my feet.

'Then we tramped across some bare fallows, driving some extremely wild partridges into a big turnip-field beyond. Though so long ago, I can see the field in my mind's eye now—one half of it was being fed off with sheep, the other half we proceeded to beat, with the result of a couple of brace of birds and an outlying pheasant. Next we came to the big fir dell, a veritable honeycomb of rabbit-holes; there the ferrets were brought out, and it being a fine, frosty morning, with the sun shining brightly, the rabbits took it into their heads to bolt, as Stratton expressed it, like "Billy O." Consequently, for a couple of hours we had great fun. Having finished the dell, we were only waiting to extricate a refractory ferret from a big earth before we made a fresh start, when a distant halloa made Mr. Stratton, who had

just raised a very warm-looking countenance from the depths of a rabbit-hole, prick up his ears. "Hallo-o-o!" once more shouted some one in the distance.

'"That be the lunch, I'm thinking," said Stratton; "we'd best holler back, and let 'em know where we are." So a series of halloas soon brought to the spot John the footman, panting under the burden of a well-filled basket and a large stone jug of beer.

THE MAN WITH THE LUNCH.

'The refractory ferret was left to his own devices for the present, and we all set to with appetites, always good, made more than usually keen by the sharp frosty air. What a jolly lunch it was! I often thought of it afterwards. How we laughed and chaffed—making such a noise, indeed, that old Stratton gave it as his opinion that the rabbits that were left in the dell wouldn't come out of their holes for at least a fortnight. At last we finished, and, the footman having taken his departure with the empty basket, we once more made a start.

'A few minutes' walk brought us to a small covert running alongside of a lane, Birch Dell by name, so-called because of the presence of one or two silver birch-trees therein.

'"We'll just run through this here," said Stratton, "there might be a heer (hare) or two, p'raps a pheasant. So, Muster Charles, if you'll get just inside and wait at this hend, Muster Jack and me'll bring it along to you."

'Accordingly, off we started with that end in view—Stratton and his two myrmidons taking the dell, whilst I perambulated the bank above.

'"A hare forward," was soon the cry, and a double shot at the far end told us that Charlie had probably stopped poor puss's further career. A few steps further and a hen pheasant rose in front of me, and I knocked it over. At the same moment Stratton shouted out, "A hare, Muster Jack! look out!"

'I just caught sight of her as she got to the top of the further bank, and fired. A shriek came from the spot.

'"O Lord! It's Muster Charles, I do believe!' ejaculated Stratton, who rushed hastily to the spot, followed by me.

'Heavens! What a sight met my gaze. There, in the midst of a lot of tangled briers and long grass lay poor Charlie—his face covered with blood, and quite insensible. *Two* hares lay on the ground at his side. It was very evident how the accident had happened. Charlie, instead of stopping where Stratton had told him, had evidently wounded the hare we drove to him; had, in the excitement of the moment, rushed forward after it, and was stooping to pick it up just as I fired; the charge of shot from my gun causing a dreadful wound in the side of his head. Stratton was the only one of us who had his wits about him.

'"Bill, run as hard as iver you can go to Farmer Bullock's yonder, and tell some on 'em to come down at once," said he to the frightened underkeeper.

'"Willum, *you* run to the pond in the lane and get some water in your hat, whilst I hold up poor Muster Charles's head, and Muster Jack, for Gawd's sake, sir, run off to the Hall and let the squire know; you'll go on your young legs quicker than any of us."

'One last glance at poor Charlie's deathlike face and away I flew, my brain on fire, and scarcely knowing which way I went. Half-way across the field I met the man coming back with the water.

'"Is he alive still, Sir?" inquired he as he passed.

'I was so choked I could not reply, but only waved my hand to him to hurry on as fast as he could. How I reached the Hall I don't know, but I did, my trembling knees almost refusing to support me to the door.

'"Whatever's the matter, Master John?" said the old butler, whom I met in the hall, in amazement at my appearance.

'Sinking into a chair, for a moment I could scarcely speak. At length I managed to explain matters as well as I could. My uncle had not yet returned from the town: I was glad of that, I remember, for how could I face him? I, the murderer of his darling, his only son!

'The butler was a man of action. One man was sent off at a gallop for the doctor; another to ——, to hasten my uncle's return; whilst he himself, worthy man, ordered out the carriage, and, arming himself with brandy, wraps, pillows, &c., set off post haste for the scene of the accident. As for me, thank goodness! I was forgotten in the general scare. I slunk away. What was I to do? I could never see my uncle again. How could I ever meet that old man's anger? He would loathe me—hate me, thought I. He would never—I felt certain—in his agony, believe it an accident. I wandered away from the house—a second Cain in my own imagination.

'As I brooded thus—Charlie's poor, pale face ever haunting me—the distant whistle of a train fell upon my ear. The thought flashed upon me in a second. Why should I not catch the afternoon express to London, and then away to some foreign land, there to atone in some way for the grief I had caused by passing the rest of my wretched life in seclusion and misery? I looked at my watch; it was just four. The express, I knew, went at half-past. I had just time, by walking fast, to catch it. I reached the station just as the train hove in sight, and, finding an empty carriage, much to my relief, was carried rapidly off to London. Arrived there, I made the best of my way on foot to a quiet street in the neighbourhood of Camden Town, where lived my old nurse; she, I knew, would sympathise with me and welcome me to her home. Her husband, too, an old servant of my father's, I knew I could trust. The good old dame was delighted to see me, and in her little parlour I quickly poured forth to her sympathising ear the dire trouble I was in. Her husband, rather a dense sort of man, could not divest himself of

the notion that I was not involved in some desperate crime, much to his wife's indignation ; and insisted on making suggestions for my safety, such as hiding me in the dust-hole, or the water-butt in the back-garden. The kitchen-chimney he even suggested as a place of safety in case of the police being unpleasantly attentive. He insisted, too, in an early stage of the conference, on going to the front door and putting up the chain.

'"You can't be too careful, Master John," said the worthy man, gravely, when he returned. "I once, many years ago, saw a man hung for shootin' of a gamekeeper ; and one never knows —one never knows."

'"Stuff and nonsense, Gibbons!" said my old nurse, "you're no better than a fool. I declare you've put my heart all of a twitter. My poor lamb (turning to me), don't mind what *he* says—don't 'ee, now—he knows nothing about it, silly man!"

'The next morning Mr. Gibbons was sent off to the City to find out the next vessel going to America, with orders to take a passage in her. In the evening he arrived home, having obeyed his wife's orders to the letter ; for he brought with him a ticket made out in the homely name of John Smith, for a second-class passage in the good ship *Mary Jane*, bound for the port of New York, and to sail in three days' time.

'In three days' time, then, I found myself on board the *Mary Jane*, with my ticket in my pocket and a hundred pounds in my purse, which hundred pounds had been forced on me as a gift or loan, whichever I pleased, by my dear old nurse.

'I wearily dragged on my life in America. Suffice it to say I managed to exist, and prospered after a fashion. For fifteen years I lived a life of real hard work. I earned, and hardly too, my daily bread, and as by so doing I succeeded in partially killing the blue devils, I may be said to have obtained the object with which I went out. My life was one of utter seclusion as far as society amongst my equals went, and during all that time I never saw an English paper, so determined was I to keep my mind away from all associations. The only communication, indeed, that I had had with the old country was through my old nurse, to whom I had written several times, enclosing her in each letter part of the money she had lent me. But, as I was careful to conceal my address even from her, I was utterly ignorant of how things had gone on in my absence.

'At last it happened that, having saved a little money, I

made a lucky speculation in land, and with one *coup* landed over a thousand pounds. One fine day a sudden longing to see the old country again seized me—seized me so strongly, indeed, that I could not resist it. I realised everything I possessed, and set sail for England. When I arrived at Liverpool the question was, Where to next? I determined to stay the night at an hotel at that place, and think over what was to be done. So having dined, I betook myself to the smoking-room, and over a cigar proceeded to look over a copy of last week's *Field*. How the sight of the dear old paper gladdened my eyes! I turned to the hunting fixtures (for it was late on in November), and searched for what poor Charlie and I used to call "*our* hounds," the Bellingdon. Ah! here they are—"Tuesday, No Man's Land; Thursday, Shapwick; Saturday, Colney Heath." The latter meet was, I recollected, the very fixture from whence they trotted off to draw my uncle's coverts. My course was quickly decided. I would go and pay a clandestine visit to my old home before doing anything else. Nobody would know me. I was a smooth-faced boy then. Who would recognise now, in the bearded man, the stripling of former years? I took the mail to London that night, and on the following afternoon (Friday) was again in the train, bound to ——, my uncle's country town. The "Red Lion Hotel" and posting-house received me with open arms, and, ordering my dinner and a gig for the morrow, for the purpose of seeing the hounds, I proceeded to spend the evening the best way I could. I need scarcely say I longed to make inquiries, but, being anxious to avoid all recognition, I determined to put them off until to-morrow.

'"Now, I don't want you to drive me to the meet," said I to my charioteer the next morning, as we started in a dog-cart from the inn yard. "You know, in all probability, which way the hounds are likely to go if they find, so drive so that, if possible, I can manage to see something of the run itself."

'My coachman was the post-boy of the establishment. I remembered him perfectly, though he did not know me. How should he, indeed, recognise in plain John Smith, with moustache and beard, the Master John of former days?

'"All right, master," replied he, "they'll find at the Dean, which they ailus draws first to a moral certainty; and the fox he invariable makes for Blaydon Woods from there. So if we goes along the Chorlbury Road we shall see 'em cross the brook

(that's a pretty sight, that is, 'specially if some on 'em gets in); and then, if we goes on to Missenden, we may see something of the finish, and then ——"

'"Ah, that'll be the very thing! capital!" said I; and, lighting a cigar, away we went.

'A nervous fit seized me, and for a long while I was afraid to open my mouth to ask questions, and listened in silence whilst my guide pratted on concerning the various points of interest we passed—whose place was this, whose that, &c. &c.

'"A rum go happened in this here spinney some years ago," said he suddenly, after a pause, waking me up from a reverie, and pointing with his whip to a covert at the side of the road.

'Heavens! could I believe my eyes? Surely I recognise that graceful silver birch! Yes; we were actually passing Birch Dell, the scene of the accident.

'"No, really!" stammered I; "what was it? Pull up for a moment, there's a good fellow, whilst I find my lighter box."

'"Ah, it *was* a rum go, that it was," continued the man. "It was, as nigh as I recollect, about fourteen, or p'raps fifteen, year ago. Two young gents—the squire's son and his nevvey—was a shootin' in that werry dell, one fine day, when the nevvey shoots the young squire, by haccident like—took 'im for a hare or summat for the moment. Well, the young squire, he was mortal bad, and like to die; which he didn't—('he didn't,' thought I) —in fact, he's alive now—('he's alive now,' echoed I)—and kickin'—('and kicking,' shouted I)."

'"Don't mind my excitement, my good friend. Yours is a capital story; go on. *Pray*, go on!"

'"The t'other young gent—that's the nevvey," continued my informant, evidently astonished at my vehemence—

'"That's the nevvey; yes, go on."

'"He thought he had killed the young squire, and he hooked it, he did. What become on 'im has never been known to this here blessed day. Rewards ha' been hoffered; 'wertisements put in hall the papers, but, bless yer, not o' no more use than nothin' at all. The young squire he's married now, and they *do* say as the only thing as makes him hever unhappy is 'is cousin not a turnin' up. Will he be out to-day? Why, ain't he the master o' the hounds? O' course he will! Come up, old gal," wound up my loquacious informant, addressing the mare between the

shafts, "or we shan't see the master nor the 'ounds neither—not to-day at least."

'If ever there was a human being changed in a second from the most wretched individual in Christendom to the happiest, that person was myself.

'Not dead, but alive and kicking, and married! Oh, it was too good to be true.

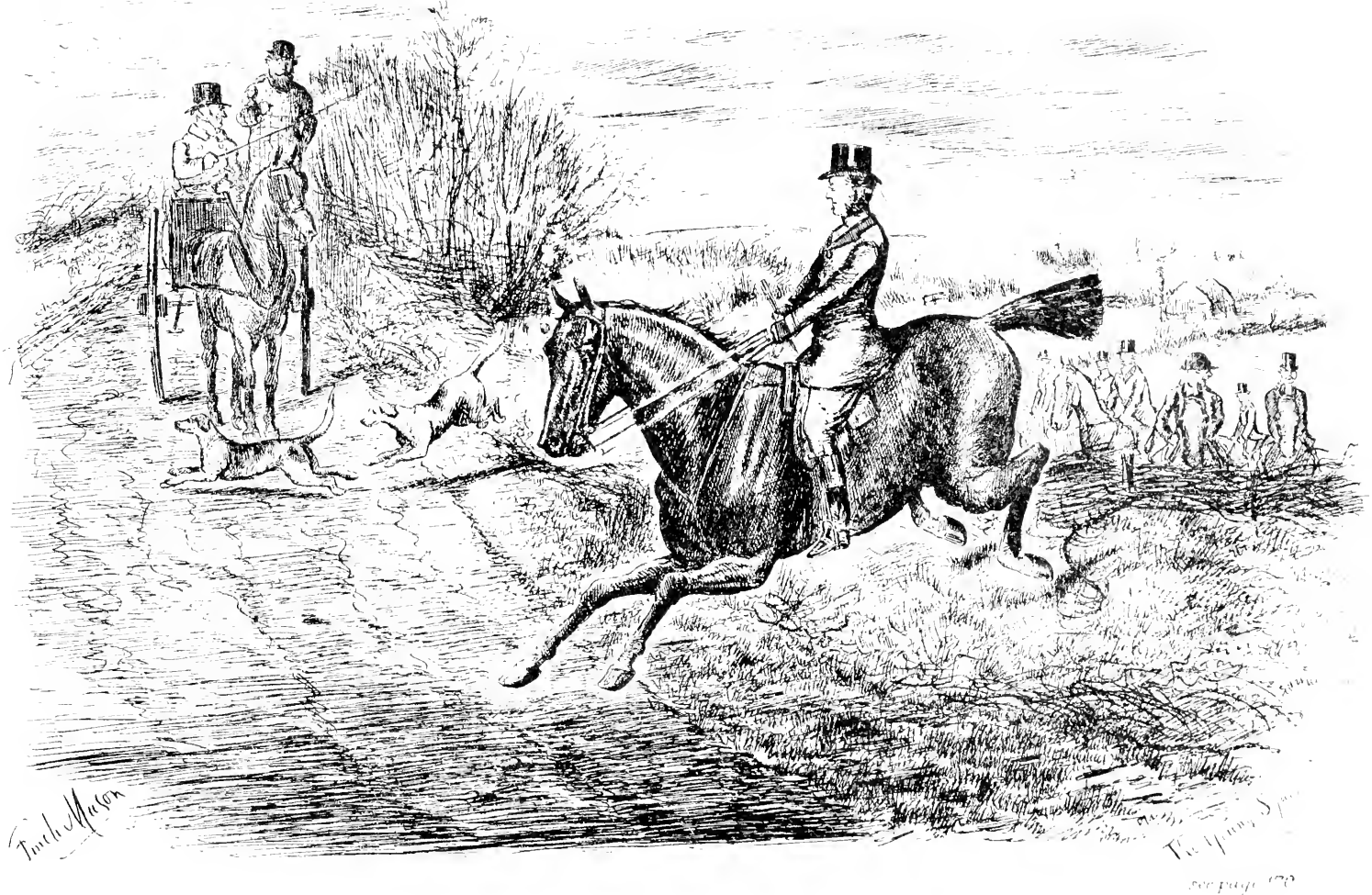
'"Here they be, I verily believe," suddenly broke in my driver, pulling up. "Yes, here they be. I hear 'em."

'Yes; and I heard them too, and in another second I saw them. My word, what a cracker they come at the brook! The hounds plunge in and out. Five men in scarlet and two in black

THE BROOK

ride at it, the rest of the field making for a bridge. Two get in and a third falls on landing. In another minute the hounds top the fence into the road, making it crack again with their weight.

'"Here comes the young squire!" said my driver, as a tall, handsome man lands over the fence close to the hounds, in most



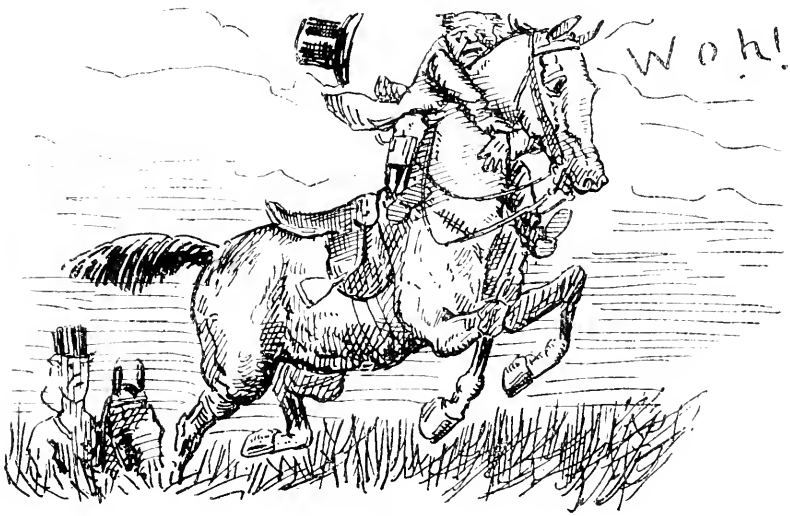
artistic style. He is across the road and over the opposite fence before I can get a good look at him. However, I saw sufficient to recognise the fact that it was Charlie in real flesh and blood.

'My story, boys and girls, is done. I made my return known that very evening, and you can imagine the welcome I got. The reception of the prodigal son was nothing to it. The only thing wanting to complete "our happiness" was my poor uncle's presence. He, alas! had been gathered to his forefathers some years since. And now have you guessed who cousin Charlie was?'

'Papa!' shouted the chorus in unison.

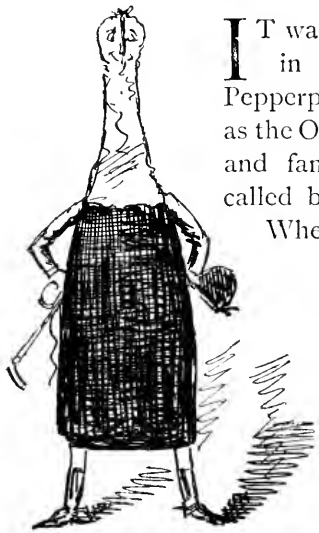
'Quite correct; and I notice he is fast asleep at the present moment, which shows how stupid my story must have been.'

'There's a moral to my story though,' wound up Uncle Jack, 'which is very applicable to you boys, and it is this—You cannot be too careful about firearms. Bear in mind, too, always to find out where the other gunners are before you shoot, otherwise one of these fine days you may be the cause, as I was, of a "terrible accident."'



WOH!

THE HUNT BREAKFAST AT MR. AND MRS. PETER PIPER'S.



MR. JUMPING-POWDER.

IT was ten o'clock on a fine morning early in December, and Mr. Peter Piper, of Pepperpot Priory, seated in what was known as the Oak Parlour, was partaking with his wife and family of that social meal commonly called breakfast.

Where is the man who is not familiar with the name of Peter Piper? We pause for a reply. Do we not talk of Peter Piper's pepper just in the same way as we do of those notable commodities, Bass's beer, Guinness's stout, or Colman's mustard?

When, therefore, a twelvemonth or so ago, it was hinted about in Syllabubshire that the extensive Priory estate, which had been in the market some little while, had been bought by the great millionaire, Mr. Peter Piper, there was none of the usual running about from one house to another, by this person and that, as there would have been under ordinary circumstances, asking, 'Who's Peter Piper? What's Peter Piper? Does anybody know anything, good, bad, or indifferent, of Peter Piper?' Not a bit of it; because, as we have already said, the name of Peter Piper was just as familiar to every one's ears as household words.

Why, even our small niece, Miss Dot Muffet, aged four, knew all about him. For, on repairing into the nursery to have a cup of five-o'clock tea with the chicks, one fine evening after our return from hunting, that exceedingly precocious young lady astonished us (her mother and myself were discussing the new arrival) by saying, '*Me* know Mister Peper Piper.' 'You know him, Dot? No, no,' said mamma; 'I'm *sure* you don't.' 'Me *do!*' said Dot, in great anger. 'Me *do!*'

'Tell us all about it, Dot, then,' we said, catching her up

on the avuncular knee. And accordingly the child, looking reproachfully at her mother, seated herself comfortably, and came out with—

> 'Peper Piper picked a peck of pepper.
> *Did* Peper Piper pick a peck of pepper?
> *If* Peper Piper picked a peck of pepper,
> *Where's* the peck of pepper Peper Piper picked?'

'Just for all the world like a moosical box,' as the nurse said.

So it came to pass, that when Peter took possession of the Priory (which, by the way, he promptly re-christened 'Pepperpot Priory') he found himself and his family received with open arms.

'Certainly,' said Peter, in wonder, 'I must ha' made 'em all sneeze at some period or other—at least, my pepper has; and that is the only reason I can think of for folks being so civil—for civil they are, and no mistake.' And there is no doubt that in one sense Mr. Peter Piper was right, and that it was his *Pepper* that did it; for the fact was, that the inhabitants of Syllabubshire, having a strong dislike to people in trade settling in their midst, were, at the first go off, rather doubtful as to how they should receive Mr. Piper; but the fact of the great authority in those parts, to wit, the Dowager Lady Tarradiddle having, in her usual decided manner (her detractors called it 'dictatorial'), declared that she failed to see anything at all *vulgar* in Pepper, and intended to call on the Pipers immediately, settled the question, and the whole countryside forthwith followed suit and hastened to leave their cards at Pepperpot Priory.

We must now hark back to where we commenced, and join the Pipers at breakfast.

Mr. Peter Piper, a bald-headed, jolly-looking elderly gentleman, is busy growling over a kidney, somewhat after the manner of a dog over a bone; not that he is a particularly greedy man, it is simply a habit he has when tackling anything in the eating line more palatable than usual.

Mrs. Peter Piper, a stout, comfortable-looking person, has finished her breakfast, and, having wheeled her chair half round, is apparently in a brown study, staring in a vacant sort of way out of the heavily-mullioned window at nothing in particular.

Mr. Peter Piper, junior, a youth rising twenty, having finished his breakfast, is now engaged, with an air of annoyance, in wiping from off his elaborately-folded, horseshoe-pinned white tie a dab of marmalade which has deposited its sticky self there; and, lastly, Miss Peter Piper, commonly called Bella, a pretty girl of sixteen, having finished *her* little breakfast, consisting of an egg and a slip of dry toast, is now busy perusing, with an air of the deepest interest, a letter from her dearest friend and quondam schoolfellow, Cecilia Larkington, the said letter consisting of three closely-written sheets, two at least of which are, of course, crossed.

At length Mr. Piper finished his breakfast. Silence prevailed for a while, which at last was broken by the voice of Mrs. Peter Piper.

'Piper, my dear,' said that lady, 'if you can spare a moment, I shall be glad of a little talk with you.'

'What is it now, Mrs. P.?' rejoined her husband, looking up from his *Times*, with a grunt.

'We have now, Piper,' began Mrs. Piper, solemnly, 'been settled at Pepperpot Priory rather more than a year, and I think it is only right that you should know your position. When you were only the owner of a huge warehouse in the City and a villa at Clapham you were nobody—a mere nobody; but now, *now*, I say, that you are proprietor of Pepperpot Priory, and goodness knows how many acres of land, besides being a J.P., and Heaven knows what, you *must* surely see, Piper, that you have a stake in the country.'

'I had a steak last night, my love, and a very tough 'un it was, my dear,' interrupted Mr. Peter Piper, with a chuckle.

'I see no occasion for jesting, Piper, I can assure you,' said his wife, severely.

'Oh, pa! how *can* you be so vulgar?' exclaimed Bella.

'Well,' continued Mrs. Piper, 'as I was observing, now you have a stake in the country, as I may say——'

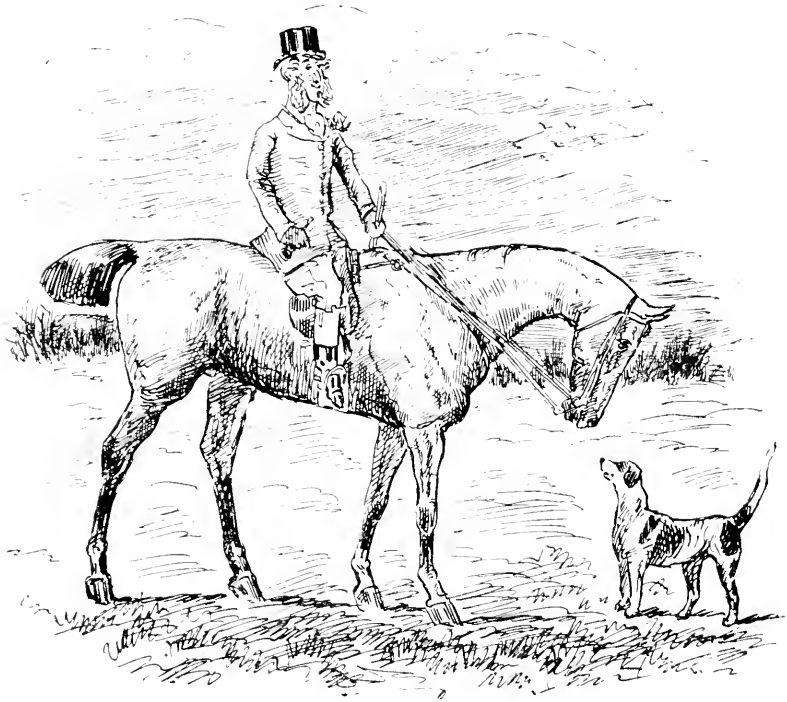
'I ought to be first chop, my dear—heh? Ha! ha! ha!' interrupted again the incorrigible Mr. Piper.

'Oh, pa, how very, *very* vulgar you are!' sighed once more the fair Bella.

'When you have *quite* done, Mr. Piper,' said Mrs. P., with an injured air, 'I will proceed.'

'Fire away, then, my love,' said her husband, putting down the *Times*. 'I'm all attention.'

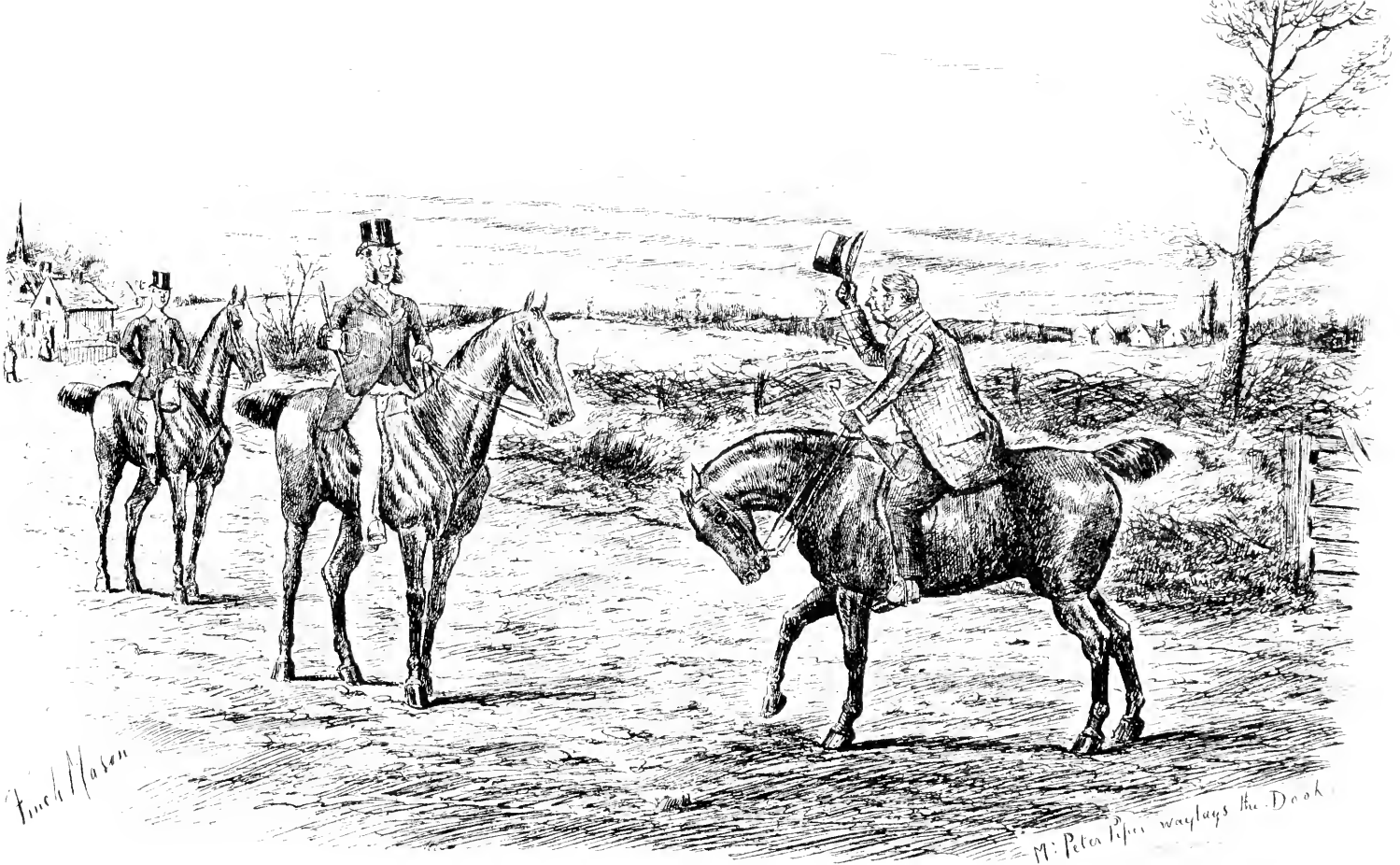
'Well, then, Piper,' said Mrs. Piper, 'the short and the long of it is, now you are in the proud position you are, you really must keep up that position, and show the people about here what you are made of. Now, we have given dinner-parties by the dozen, to say nothing of garden-parties, and lawn-tennis tournaments, and charity feasts, not to mention the ball when



HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF SYLLABUB.—AFTER SMUDGE, R.A.

Bella came out, but there is one class of entertainment we have not attempted, and that is a Hunt breakfast.

'We must entertain,' said Mrs. Piper, rising with dignity from her seat as she spoke, and striking the table emphatically with her hand, whilst at the same time she struck an attitude similar, as she imagines, of the Grand Old Man when addressing the House of Commons—'I say we must entertain—and that quickly, before any one else seizes the notion—his Grace the Duke of Syllabub and the members of his Hunt at breakfast.'


Finch Mason
Mr Peter Piper waylays the Book

'Well, my dear,' said Mr. Peter Piper, 'I'm agreeable; but p'raps the Dook won't come, and, besides, there ain't a fox in the place. Duckshot, the keeper, trapped 'em all long ago, "because they didn't agree with the pheasants," he said.'

'Oh! I've thought of all that,' said his energetic wife. 'Trust me. As to the foxes, the man in Leadenhall Market, who supplies your pheasants and hares and things can send a few down; and as to the Duke, I'm *sure* he'll come if you ask him. Yes, Piper, you must waylay his Grace to-morrow as he comes away from the magistrates' meeting. So *that's* settled, Mr. P.,' and Mrs. Piper, with the air of a commander who has gained a great victory, sailed from the room.

Accordingly the very next day Mr. Peter Piper, like the docile husband he was, did as he was bid, and waylaid the Duke as he trotted along the Muddlebury road on his way home from the magistrates' meeting.

'Devilish good of you, 'pon my soul it is, my dear Mister Pipar!' said his 'Grease,' as Mr. P. called him. 'I'll come with all the pleasure in life. *By Jove*, I will! We'll make it the 23rd if you don't mind. *What?* That's two days before Christmas don't yer know. All the boys and gals home from school. Liquor 'em all up and let 'em ride over the hounds. *What?*' and, shaking hands, with much effusion, with the gratified Mr. Peter Piper, the 'Dook,' taking his nag on to the turf at the side of the road, went off at a hand canter.

Cards of invitation were forthwith scattered broadcast through the land :—

Pepperpot Priory, Dec. 5th, 188—.

MR. AND MRS. PETER PIPER

request the pleasure of

Mr. and Mrs. ——'s company at Breakfast, on Thursday, 23rd Dec.,

at half-past ten o'clock,

To meet his Grace the Duke of Syllabub. *R. S. V. P.*

And to show that the Duke on his part had not forgotten his engagement to Mr. Peter Piper, the following card of the meets of his hounds was sent round to the members of his hunt :—

THE DUKE OF SYLLABUB'S FOXHOUNDS

will meet

Monday, 20th Dec., No Man's Land.

Thursday, 23rd Dec., Pepperpot Priory.

Each day at half-past ten o'clock.

It being holiday time, everybody was delighted. The happy boys home from school anticipated a glorious field day. Tom Trimmer, the Duke's huntsman, looked forward to a fine harvest in the way of Christmas boxes, champagne being in his opinion a rare incentive to the free opening of purse-strings.

Mrs. and Miss Peter Piper were as busy as bees preparing for the great day. Gunter, Fortnum and Mason, Morel, in fact, all the great dealers in goody-goodies were written to. Messrs. Guzzle and Toper, Mr. Piper's wine merchants, received such an order for champagne and liqueurs as fairly astonished them; and lastly, Mr. Slyboots, the well-known purveyor of fancy stock in Leadenhall Market (Slyboots will get you anything in the fancy line, from a tame rabbit to a reindeer), was commanded to send

MISS PETER PIPER WRITING FOR THE BAG FOX.

down one of his very best foxes, 'one with as fine a tail as possible,' wrote Miss Piper in the fine Italian hand she had acquired whilst under the tuition of the Misses Pixie at the Alexandra House School for Young Ladies, Regent's Park.

The twenty-third arrived at last. 'And a heavenly morning it is,' said Mr. Peter Piper to himself, looking out of his dressing-

room window; 'almost too bright for hunting, perhaps; but just the thing for an occasion like this.'

The sun shone brightly, and there was just a suspicion of frost—enough to make the horses feel inclined to jump about, and people in general light-hearted.

Ten o'clock strikes. The band of the Muddlebury Volunteers has arrived, and is stationed in a corner of the carriage drive. They are followed by little Shorthand, the sub-editor of the *Muddlebury Gazette*, who, with flowing pen, will gracefully describe the great event in the next number of his paper. The

GOING TO THE MEET.

big stable clock strikes the quarter past, by which time the first of the red coats are seen in the distance just passing through the lodge-gates. There is a perfect mob of powdered footmen to throw open the massive hall-doors. Mr. Peter Piper himself, arrayed for the first time in his life in a red coat and top-boots, and looking rather uncomfortable therein, appears upon the scene to welcome his guests. None too soon, for here they come in shoals—all the world and his wife, apparently.

Punctually to a minute the Duke himself drives up on his drag, his charming daughter, Lady Blanche Cowslip, on the box-seat, and a loadful of guests on the top. Sir Tilbury Spanker and Lady Spanker in a mail phaeton—my lady driving—came

next. Next appears a shabby-looking, old four-wheeled chaise, drawn by a flea-bitten grey; it is the equipage of the Reverend Dullmug, Mrs. D. by his side, two little Dullmugs, and a hobbledehoy servant in the back-seat. Following the trap, on another old grey—the exact counterpart of the one between the shafts—rides Adolphus Dullmug, a cub aged twenty, the pride of Mrs. Dullmug's heart, and the apple of his father's eye.

It is Adolphus's first appearance in the hunting-field. Here they come—the Joneses, the Browns, and the Larkins, and the Tomkynses; Colonel this, Major that; big boys from Eton and Harrow, little boys and girls on every description of pony; Tom Chirrup, the most popular man in the country, and his wife, their two boys and a girl, all mounted, and looking all over like going.

'How are ye, Tom? Hallo! old fellow—how are you? How well the mare looks, Mrs. Chirrup! You'll beat us all, as usual, I suppose, to-day? Here are the hounds. Tom Trimmer and his whips in their new scarlets. Run and ask them what they'll have,' says the hospitable Mr. Peter Piper.

The band strikes up :—

> 'Hey ho, Chevy!
> Hark forward, hark forward, Tantivy!'

making the horses jump about like lambs at play, and the hounds stare with astonishment.

'Here's a lark! Only wants a merry-go-round or two to make it like a fair, does it, old chappy?' remarks young Charlie Bang to his friend, Jack Rapid, as he canters up on his chestnut hack, which, frightened at the noise, lashes out and nearly demolishes the big drum.

Everybody's come now, and the big dining-room is crowded. Heavens! how everybody is eating and drinking! The champagne, too, to which apparently there is no limit, sets the tongues going like anything.

Above the din and clatter of knives and forks one hears—'*Do* have another bit of this *aspic*, Mrs. Chirrup. *Please* do. Well, another glass of champagne, then.' 'Can't eat much in the morning, old chappy; always feel jumpy don'tcherknow; can always *dwink*, though.' 'The best day we have had this year, Lady Blanche went like a bird.' '*Do* look at old Truffles, what a greedy old dog it is! See, he's eaten a whole dish of ortolans, all but two, and I mean to have them. I say, Truffles,

Mrs. Tomkyns would like an ortolan, when you've quite done with 'em.'

'I say! They tell me——' (whisper, whisper, whisper). 'By J-o-o-v-e, you don't say so! Well, I always thought—ha, well, I won't say *what* I thought,' &c., &c.

But, hark!

Rap! rap! rap! goes somebody's knife on the table. S-h-h-h

THE DOOR RETURNS THANKS.

—silence in the pig-market! See, Mr. Piper rises from his chair at the end of the long table, and with a good many hums and ha's (for Mr. P. is a bad hand at public speaking) proposes in felicitous terms the time-honoured toast of 'Fox-hunting coupled with the health of the noble master of the hounds, his Grace the Duke of Syllabub.'

Much cheering and rapping of tables by the now wine-flushed company.

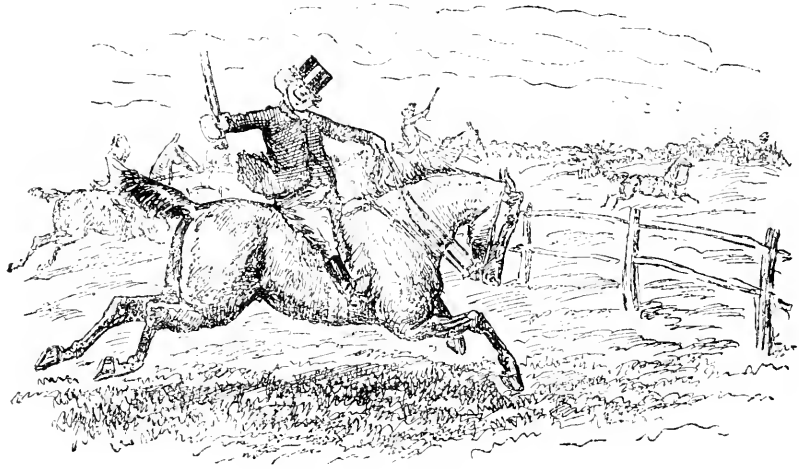
Mrs. Peter Piper, quite overcome with her feelings, champagne, and the excitement generally of the morning, sheds tears.

The Duke rises to reply. More rapping of tables and filling of glasses. His Grace is a man of few words, and is in a hurry to be off. 'Can't sufficiently thank 'em all—by *Jove!* he can't —kind manner and cordiality with which they have drunk his health. Always do his best to show sport—noble science—healthy exercise—brings people together—promotes good fellowship. *What?* One more toast before we break up, "Health of our genial hosts, Mr. and Mrs. Peter Piper."'

'Mrs. Piper, your very good health—Mr. Piper, your health.' 'Peter, old boy, here's towards you' (this from that impudent dog, Charlie Bang, who has, until now, never seen Mr. Piper before in his life).

Just as Mr. Piper is deliberating how to reply to the toast, the Duke nips his flow of ideas in the bud, by rising hastily from his chair, throwing his napkin away, and going to Mrs. Piper's end of the table to say farewell.

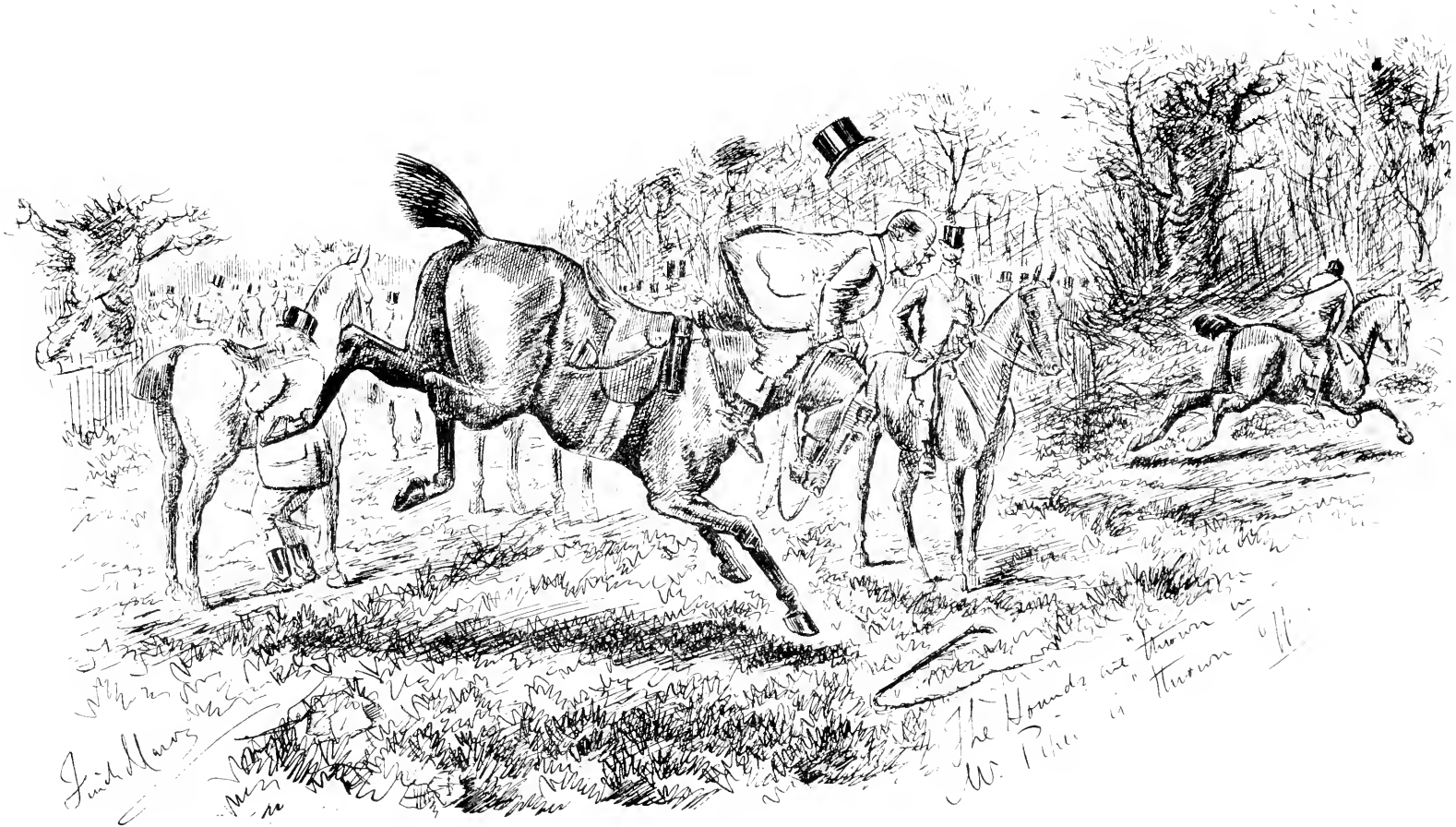
This is the signal for a general stampede of the company, and there is a general rush for cigars, hats, whips, grooms, and horses. The band, which is now very drunk, strikes up 'John Peel.' The



AFTER THE HUNT BREAKFAST

Duke at last gets his hunter, and giving the signal goes off across the park at a brisk trot to draw the Home Wood, Mr. Peter Piper ambling along proudly at his side.

A flight of post and rails in the way is forthwith taken advantage of by the larkers. Half-a-dozen horses are galloping



see page 183.

loose about the park, and one of the fallen, old Joe Guzzler, who never knows when he has had enough, refuses to get up, and starts a comic song on the spot, to the great edification of the company.

Here we are at the Home Wood, and the hounds are thrown *in* and—sad to relate—at precisely the same moment Mr. Peter Piper is thrown *off*. No bones broken though, and the pepper-merchant is quickly up in the saddle again.

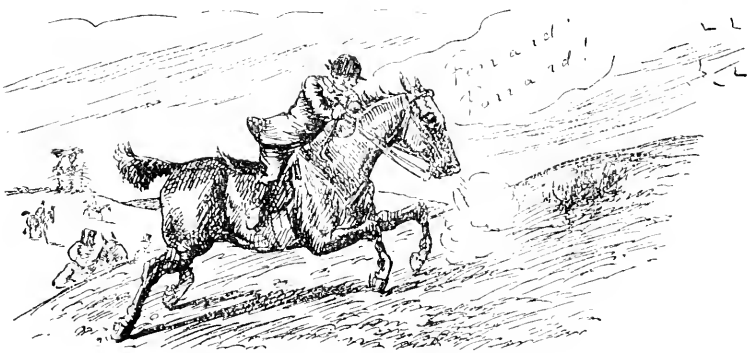
Hark! There is a whimper, now a long-drawn note from old Burglar, followed by another from Bellman, and immediately after a regular chorus from the entire pack.

'A bagman, of course,' mutters the Duke, 'and I'll bet a pony they chop him in covert,' added he, eyeing the noisy crowd surrounding the covert at every point.

At that moment an unmistakable view halloo is heard from the far end of the wood.

'By Jove, he's away! for that's Joe's voice, I know,' said his Grace, his face lit up with excitement; 'perhaps it ain't a bagman after all. Come along, Blanche.'

And without more ado the Duke turns his horse short round, and, followed by his daughter, jumps the hogbacked stile at the corner of the wood, and gallops to the halloo as hard as ever his



'OVER THE HILLS AND FAR AWAY.'

horse can lay legs to the ground. The hounds are just streaming out of covert as he gets to the point.

'There's a blazing scent, and I believe we're in for a buster,' said he to his huntsman, who jumps out of the wood at the moment.

'I thinks we be, too, your grace,' replied Tom, with a grin Toot—toot—toot, goes his horn.

Twang—twang—twang, goes his master's.

They now top the first fence together, a rasper.

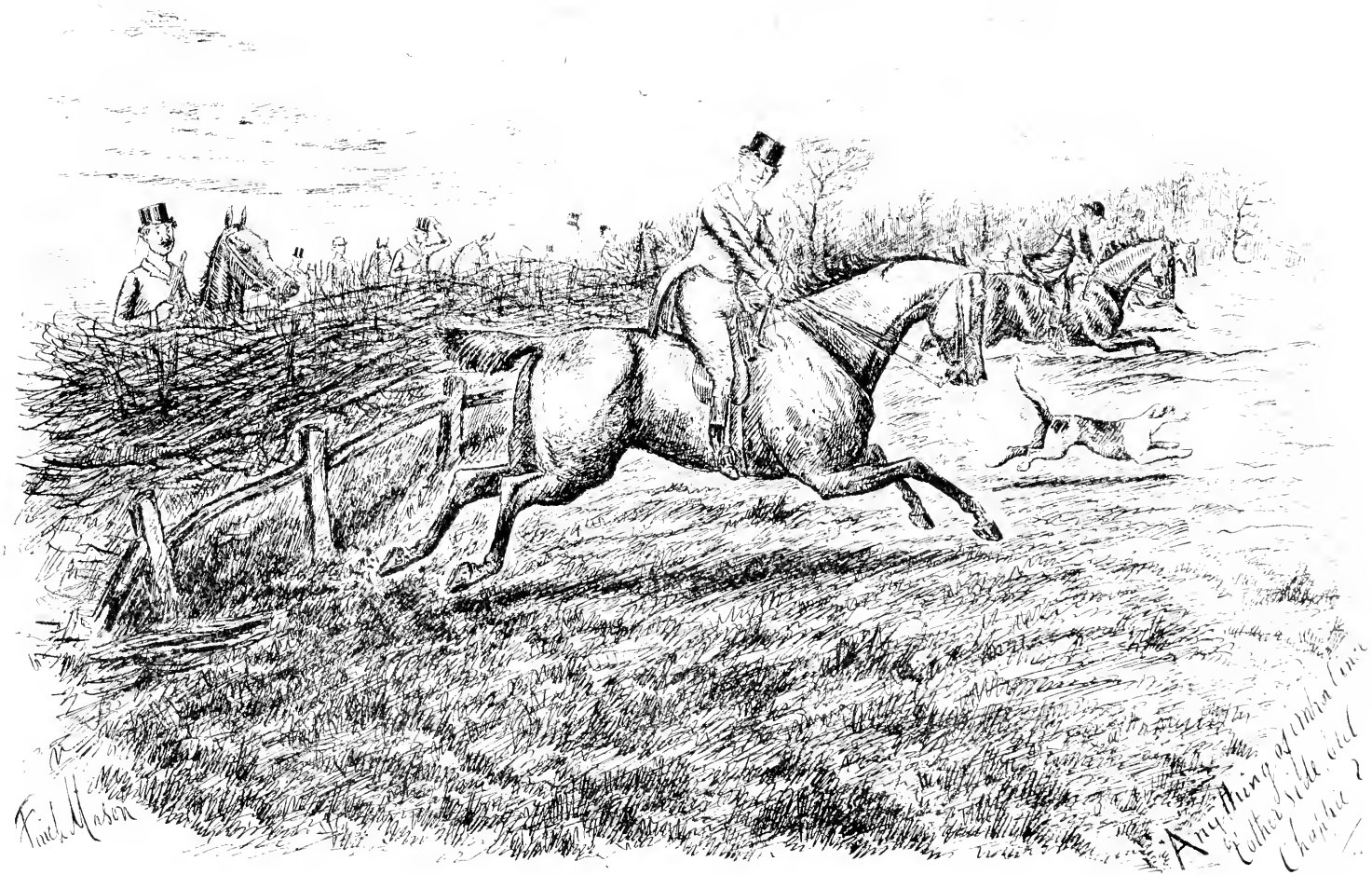
'Anything of importance t'other side, old chappie?' holloas out young Noodle, who is a trifle nervous this morning, to his friend, Jack Rapid, who has just charged the fence, and got over with a scramble.

'Yes! *I* am, thank goodness!' shouts back Jack, with a grin, as he gallops on, as hard as he can go, in the wake of the hounds.

'Forrard! Forrard!' is the cry. Not that there is much need of it, for the hounds are going rather too fast for them as it is.

We must now leave the hounds for a little while, and turn to the fox. As before-mentioned, Mr. Slyboots, of Leadenhall Market, had been written to to provide a fox for the occasion, so as to make sure of a find.

Accordingly, when the five-o'clock down express arrived at Muddlebury, on the eve of the great breakfast, amongst the numerous articles in the guard's van all directed to Peter Piper, Esq., Pepperpot Priory—cases of champagne, barrels of oysters, hampers of this and boxes of that—was a large box with wire-netting over the top to admit the air, containing what appeared to be a tolerably good specimen of that noble animal, the fox. Mr. Duckshot, the keeper, had driven over in his cart (the same which he used for conveying, on the sly, his master's pheasants and hares to his friend, Mr. Tom Tiddler, the poaching, skittle-playing landlord of the Red Cow beer-house, on the Muddlebury Road, who, in turn, disposed of them at a considerable profit to the game-dealers) expressly to meet him, and took him off to his own cottage for the night. The next morning, according to orders, he repaired, together with Diggles the under-gardener, to the thickest part of the homewood, carrying the fox in his box between them. 'He sot up and looked at us just like a Christian,' as Diggles described afterwards, 'and then trotted off into the depths of the wood.' Now, seeing that our fox was not only extremely plump, but had also been cooped up for a considerable time in Mr. Slyboots' shop—to say nothing of being turned suddenly down in a strange country—it stands to reason that he was not in the very best trim for a run with a first-rate pack of fox-hounds, and the chances are, that had the hounds come across him they would, in all probability, as the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Chapter 2

see page 184

Duke had prophesied, have chopped him in covert. As it happened, however, luck especially favoured him on this memorable day.

As may well be imagined with such a personage as Mr. Duckshot in charge, our friend Mr. Peter Piper's preserves were entirely tenantless as regards foxes. It happened, however, that on the very day before the breakfast at the Priory, Mr. Piper's next-door neighbour, old Colonel Blunderby, who was no foxhunter, and consequently did not care in the least whether the hounds found or not in his coverts, had arranged to shoot his big wood, and the guns of himself and his five guests quickly frightened away a very fine old dog fox that had been quartered there for the last three weeks. Sly Reynolds then, not caring to go far, just trotted off to Mr. Peter Piper's homewood, intending to return to his diggings at the Colonel's when things were quiet again. He had supped rather late off a remarkably fine hen pheasant, which, having been winged at some time, was obliged to sleep on the ground instead of going up to roost with the others in the numerous fir-trees in the wood, and being rather a lazy fox was still taking it out in sleep when the melodious voices of the Duke's hounds woke him suddenly up. In point of fact, Trimbush and Traveller were as nearly as possible upon him, and he only just roused himself in time to save his bacon. It was not the first time by several that he and the Duke's hounds had had a game together; he had always beaten them, and being not only a game fox, but in tip-top condition as well, he did not fear the result now one little bit. So, after a moment's debate within himself, whether he should make for the forest, where he knew he would be safe; or whether he should turn his head towards Blackberry Dean, a favourite covert of his, where the keepers, he was certain, were sure not to have stopped the earth, thereby making the Duke and his field cross a very difficult country, including that very wide and deep brook, the Slush; he, like a sporting fox, chose the latter. So, giving his well-tagged brush an impudent flick as he emerged from the covert, he broke away in the face of half the field.

As we have seen, the Duke and his hounds were soon after him; and as to our other friend, the 'Bagman,' who watched the fun from a snug recess in an old pollard-tree, whither he

had taken refuge — why, putting his tongue in his cheek, he waited until the cry of the hounds was almost lost in the distance, and then, descending from his perch, sallied forth in quest of food—for Mr. Duckshot, the keeper, not having thought it worth while to feed him during the time he was a guest at his cottage, he naturally felt uncommonly peckish.

And now for the hounds again. Heavens! how Mr. Peter Piper's champagne makes them all ride! Even Mr. P., though he has never done such a thing before in his life, charges the first fence like a man, and being quickly deposited on the broad of his back, abandons the hunt and wends his way home. Young Dullmug, the parson's son, also comes to grief here, the grey having a run by himself. Look at Mr. Muff, who never jumped anything bigger than a sheep-hurdle in his life! He's actually following little Teddy Bobson, the steeplechase rider, over some nasty post and rails in a corner.

A crackling of timber is heard; it is our reckless friend, Charlie Bang, whose horse, not rising, has smashed to smithereens the three top bars of a brand new white gate.

'Pity they don't put better timber in their gates,' is all he says as he crops his horse heartily. Close to the pack, sailing away perfectly straight, are the Duke and his daughter; it is quite a treat to see them. A little to the left ride Tom and Mrs. Chirrup, and their eldest boy, taking everything as it comes. And now they come to the much-dreaded Slush; there's no mistake about it! Splash into it go the hounds, over goes the huntsman, over go the Duke and his daughter; a little lower down, Splash! goes Captain Topsawyer, right in the middle of it.

'Where my friend goes, I go,' exclaims Charlie Bang, doing the like, nearly jumping on the top of him.

'Put him at it best pace, Cissy,' shouts young Frank Lovelace, as he clears the brook handsomely. 'Put him at it best pace,' shouts he again, turning round in his saddle to look.

'Well done, you darling!' says he in ecstasy, as a second after, charming Cissy Cloverfield clears the brook in splendid style, and is now galloping along by his side, her lovely face glowing with health and excitement.

'Hah! old Truffles won't have it. I knew he wouldn't.

see page 183

Nor more will that heavy swell, Mr. James Jessamy, nor Captain Cuff, nor Major Brag. Mare cast a shoe, has she, Major? Ah! that's a way your nags have, I rather think.'

Old Truffles is, at least, honest about it. 'It's a very narsty place,' says he, 'and I shall go home.' And having taken a mighty pull at his flask, and lit a fat cigar, he proceeds to jog leisurely homewards, followed by the rest of the funkers.

And now the end of the run is nigh, for, see, Blackberry Dean looms black in the distance.

'Yonder he goes!' cries the Duke, as he views the fox stealing steadily along over the brow of a hill. 'He's had pretty near enough of it. D'ye think the earth's open at the Dean, Tom?' inquires he.

'I varry much question if that dommed fule of a kipper has stopped it,' replies Tom.

'Never mind. I do believe we shall do him now,' says his Grace, in great excitement. 'He's dead beat, I'll be hanged if he isn't.'

Tom, cap in hand, gives his hounds a lift. They are in the same field with him now. See! there's the earth, under a big oak-tree, outside the covert. The fox knows it well.

'It's open!'

'Just too late, Tom.'

Another second and the hounds are clustered round the foot of the old tree, indignant at the escape of their quarry.

Says the Duke, mopping his brow, 'We won't dig him, Tom; he's a rare good 'un.'

'And,' says the indignant Tom Trimmer to the keeper, who has just appeared, 'if ye'd stopped the earth up we'd a paid you double, ye silly man!'

And so ended, as far as sport was concerned, what was called for a long while after the great Pepperpot Priory day.

Everybody was delighted.

The Duke was pleased, because he had enjoyed a rattling good run when least expected.

Mr. and Mrs. Peter Piper were pleased, because everybody else was pleased.

Charlie Bang was pleased, because he had beaten his friend, Topsawyer, by three falls.

Pretty Cissy Cloverfield was pleased, because Frank Lovelace proposed to her on the way home.

Frank was pleased, because he was accepted.

Tankerville major, the Etonian, was pleased, because he had succeeded in pounding young Brown, the Harrovian.

Tom Trimmer, the huntsman, was pleased, because he got at least ten pounds more in the way of Christmas-boxes than he counted upon.

In fact, everybody was pleased—men and women, boys and girls.

As for Parson Dullmug, he had got himself into such a happy

THE REV. DULLMUG HAS A BILIOUS ATTACK.

frame of mind by the time he started for the journey home in the family rattletrap—(his detractors *did* say that the parson was dr——. No, no, I can't believe it)—and sent that old grey horse of his along at such a deuce of a pace that the poor old brute had a fit of the staggers three miles from home, and gave up the ghost there and then in the middle of the road.

The shock following this sad event so upset the Vicar that he could not perform the service on Christmas Day, the whole burden of it, in consequence, falling to his curate.

'Mister Lambkin's adoin' o' the dooty,' the parish clerk, old Droner, explained to Charlie Bang, who, in his usual free-and-easy way, addressing him by the name of old Sheepskin-and-Beeswax, had asked what was the row with the reverend.

'Mister Lambkin's adoin' o' the dooty, cos the passon's got the "boile" werry bad;' which was the clerk's elegant way of expressing that the Reverend Dullmug had got a bad bilious attack.

Lastly, so pleased were Mr. and Mrs. Peter Piper with the success of their entertainment, that they propose to make the breakfast to the Duke and his hunt an annual affair, to take place always about the same time of year, for the special convenience of their young friends home for the holidays. In the meanwhile they beg to wish every one, old and young, boys and girls—

'A Merry Christmas and A Happy New Year.'

MR. PETER PIPER.

A MIDNIGHT ADVENTURE.

'As me and moy compan-i-ons was a settin of a snare,
Hup there cum the game-keeper : fur he we did not care,
For we can wrastle and foight, me boys,
And jump ower anywhere.'—*The Poacher.*

THE POACHER.

IT was in the month of November, some two or three years ago, that I made one of a large party assembled at my old friend Jack Halliday's, at Fernely Hall—a delightful old place in one of the Midland counties—for the purpose of pheasant shooting.

On the second night after my arrival we were all—that is to say, the men of the party, the ladies having retired to bed—assembled as usual in the smoking-room, arrayed in all the glories of smoking-suits of gorgeous hues ; busy in the consumption of alcoholic liquids and that agreeable narcotic, the cigar ; in fact, revelling in all the delights of a modern midnight conversation.

The full complement of guests had been made up that very evening by the arrival of a stout red-faced little gentleman from town, none other than the celebrated lawyer, Mr. Thomas Trimmer, Q.C., or Tommy Trimmer, as his most intimate friends called him; and a most valuable addition to our party he made. He was certainly one of the most entertaining men I ever met in my life, and that particular night, being evidently in the vein, he succeeded in keeping the smoking-room in one perpetual roar of laughter. Story after story of the very raciest description flowed from his lips in rapid succession; and accompanied as they were by perpetual change of facial expression, and the perfection of mimicry, I no longer wondered at the eminent Q. C. being like Soapy Sponge's friend, Mr. Puffington, of Hanby House, 'an amazin' instance of a popular man.'

It was just on the stroke of twelve; in fact, as the dyspeptic young man in the song says,—

'The Clock was striking the Hour;'

and we had just finished laughing at the merry Q. C.'s latest waggery, when the footman suddenly appeared, and informed his master that a mounted policeman had that moment ridden up in great haste, and wished to see him directly on most important business.

'What's up now, I wonder?' said Halliday, as he left the room, with the parting injunction of 'Help yourselves, you fellows, I'll be back directly.'

We had scarcely had time amongst ourselves to wonder at what, vulgarly speaking, was up, at such an hour, when back came our host in a great state of excitement.

'Here's a game, my boys!' he exclaimed, as he burst in upon us. 'They're out in full force in the fir plantations, shooting away like blazes, the policeman tells me.'

'Who's out? Who's shooting? What do you mean?' inquired the mystified Q. C.

'Who? Why the poachers, of course!' answered Jack; 'and I'm off to see if I can lend my men a hand. You chaps won't mind my leaving you, will you?'

'Mind you leaving us, indeed! Why, we'll *all* go,' shouted one.

'Of course we will; couldn't think of letting you go by

yourself, old man. What would Mrs. Halliday say?' said another.

Whilst as for the little Q. C., he threw out his chest, drank off a beaker of brandy and soda, and declared 'he felt ready to face all the poachers in the county.' In short, every man Jack of us volunteered our services, which were—Halliday seeing we would take no denial—after a little demur on his part, accepted.

Then ensued such a putting on of shooting-jackets, thick boots, and nondescript garments generally, as never was. The footman came in with all the thickest sticks he could lay his hands on from the hall, and having each collared one, we prepared for a start. Just as we were off, another delay occurred. Our learned counsel had forgotten his shooting-boots; what was to be done?

'I'll tell you,' said Jack Halliday, who was in a hurry to be moving; 'Pop on a pair of my top-boots; they'll go splendidly over your trowsers, old chap, and keep your understandings as warm as toast. Bring a pair of my top-boots, Robert, as quick as possible. Sharp's the word! That's the style, old man! Why you look splendid!—a cross between Don Cæsar de Bazan and a sheriff's officer,' added he facetiously, as our learned friend drew on the top-boots, which were several sizes too large for him.

The little gentleman did, indeed, cut a comical figure. A down-the-road driving-coat with large pearl buttons, belonging to some one staying in the house, and much too large for him, covered his plump figure, nearly hiding the boots; a soft, deer-stalking hat, of a plaid pattern, adorned his head; and in his hand he carried a stick—or, I should say, club—of formidable dimensions.

'If you don't settle any of these cursed poachers you'll frighten 'em, anyhow,' laughed Jack, as he eyed his friend with much amusement.

'Now, we're all ready, so "Vorwarts!"' as our Teutonic friends say. 'Quick! march!'

Another minute and we emerged into the night air. What a lovely night it was! as bright as day. Who wouldn't be a poacher, thought I for a minute, as I heard a shot in the distance ring through the stilly night, followed by another and another, eliciting the remark from Halliday that the beggars

were in force, and no mistake. By this time we had crossed the park, and were now approaching the keeper's cottage, where we were to meet the head keeper himself, to learn the news and arrange a plan of action. There he was, waiting for us.

'Glad to see so many of you genelmen,' said that worthy—a stubby, powerful-looking fellow, giving one the idea that if he *did* get hold of his man he would hang on—touching his hat as we appeared. 'There's a rare gang on 'em this time, Sir,' he continued, addressing his master: 'It's that gallus lot from North Aston, with Big George, only out o' gaol last Toosday, at their 'ead. Rot him!' said the keeper, in a sudden burst of rage, and giving a formidable-looking life-preserver he wore fastened to his wrist an ominous twirl as he spoke: 'If I *do* get upsides with him I'll give him something that'll pay 'im back for knocking the senses out o' me, as he did the last time he was 'ere—blessed if I don't!'

'Oh! Big George is here, is he?' observed Halliday. 'Some of us'll have a rough time of it then, it strikes me very forcibly. I say, my learned serjeant,' said he, addressing the Q.C., 'if you do come across an extra big 'un, don't waste your time by saying "Qui va là?" or "What's your little game?" or anything of that sort, but serve him the same as you would a rabbit in thick covert: hit him directly you see him. And now, Wiggles, what do you propose?' turning to the keeper.

'Well, Sir, what I thinks is this here,' returned the guardian of the pheasants, taking his handkerchief from its accustomed resting-place in the corner of his flat-brimmed hat, and mopping his brow—an action, by the way, I have noticed invariably performed by keepers when in a dilemma—'I proposes that me and my men, and say 'arf o' you genelmen, goes slap at the warmin in a body—which they're hall together you may depend—and the rest o' the genelmen I should like—with your permission, that is—to post 'ere and there in the big ride close to the 'igh road, in case any of the chicken-'earted ones turns tail, as p'raps they will, and tries to bolt back. The mounted patrol he's well forrard on the Medbury road along with his mate, in case any of 'em gives us the slip the t'other side of the covert: so between us, I fancy, we're pretty safe to get tight hold of the whole party on 'em.'

'Splendid!' answered Jack Halliday. 'Come along, boys!

Now for it! Hark at the scoundrels! there they go! Bang! bang! bang! They'll have half the pheasants in the place if we're not sharp. Cut along, Wiggles, and show the way; we'll follow.'

Away we marched, glad to be moving, for though it was the loveliest of nights—the sort of night, for instance, that would look uncommonly well depicted on the stage by the master-hand of Mr. Beverley, whilst one reclined at one's ease in a comfortable stall—it was, as Jack Halliday remarked, 'beastly cold,' and standing talking to the keeper had set all our teeth chattering like so many castanets.

Emerging into the high road we arrived at the fir covert, in which Big George and his friends were carrying on their nefarious pursuits.

Bang! bang! bang! went their guns, sounding now quite close. Bow! wow! wow! went in response the deep voices of the pointers and retrievers of the Halliday *ménage* from the kennels at the keeper's house, as if these canine sportsmen were saying to each other, 'What the devil do these fellows mean by shooting at this time o' night?—why aren't *we* in it?'

'Is that you, Jim?' we now heard the voice of Wiggles say, as a tall figure, followed by several others, suddenly appeared from the shadow of the trees.

'All right, Mr. Wiggles, here we be,' was the reply.

'Post these 'ere gents then, Jim, at hintervals along that ride—you hunderstand, don't yer?' said the head keeper, picking out Mr. Thomas Trimmer, Q. C., and three more—the weakliest looking ones of the party, according to his wary eye.

'This way, genelmen,' said Jim, leading his detachment off down the ride referred to in his commander's order, the plucky little barrister throwing me a glance full of confidence as he marched away in rear of the column—to use a military expression.

And now for our part of the play.

'They're close handy, where that 'ere barley-stack stands, by the birds' feeding-place, it's my opinion,' said the head keeper in a whisper; 'hif so, we shall be hon to 'em in another minnit, genelmen, so look hout,' taking, as he spoke, his life-preserver firmly in his hand.

Giving him a nod of intelligence we crept on in his wake.

Bang! went a gun close to us the moment after he had spoken, followed by a heavy thud.

'*Pick 'im up, Bill!*' we heard a gruff voice say. 'Not another o' them blessed wooden 'uns, is it?'

'Noa, George, a cock bird this be; a foine 'un, tew, as ever ar see in my loife,' was the reply.

The excitable Mr. Wiggles waited to hear no more.

'Come on, genelmen!' he shouted, and darted forward, followed by us all.

We emerged in another second out of the narrow path up which we had crept into the principal ride of the wood, and there found ourselves suddenly face to face with at least a dozen poachers, all with guns—one of them, the owner of the voice we had heard, caught red-handed, as it were, with the pheasant he had just shot in his hand. If identity was our object there was no difficulty on that score, for the moon shone brightly down on us between the solemn rows of fir-trees, sighing wearily, as much as to say, *Do* go away, you noisy people! we're very, *very* sleepy: we are, indeed. A moment of silence ensued, broken only by the noise of an owl that suddenly flew out in the midst of us, and then the voice of the leader of the gang of poachers—none other, indeed, than the redoubtable Big George—was heard inquiring, with many oaths, 'wot we wanted.'

'Wot do we want?' shouted back the indignant Wiggles. 'Why, we want *you*, you blaggard! and, wot's more, we means to 'ave yer; at least I do.'

And with no more ado the plucky keeper made one rush for his gigantic enemy. A muttered execration, a dull, heavy thud as the two velveteen-clad bodies came together, followed by a crashing sound as of a heavy blow, was what we heard. What we *saw* was, where a second before two men were, there was but *one* now. The other was represented by an inert mass lying on the ground, lying so still that there was nothing in its appearance that would lead one to suppose that it contained life of any sort.

Needless to say which of the two men was the victor. Big George it was whose tall figure stood boldly out in the moonlight, and poor, plucky Wiggles it was who lay insensible at his feet, floored for the second time in his life by the poacher's gun-stock. The fir-trees sighed more sadly than ever.

For a second we were all completely paralysed—the whole

thing had been done so suddenly; and it was not until the burly ruffian, Big George, spoke, that we seemed to realise the situation.

'Come on, all the blessed lot on yer!' shouted he, with one foot on the prostrate body of the keeper, brandishing his gun barrel over his head as he spoke. 'Come on! we're more than you, and we means to foight afore you takes us or our fezzants either. So come on, the whole blazin' lot of yer, and be d—d to yer, I say!'

The words were hardly out of his mouth before we made one determined rush at the midnight depredators. The man I myself went for, now clubbed his gun, and as I neared him brought it down with a heavy sweep that, had it caught me fair, would have settled me for the evening at all events, but my friend in the smock-frock was slow, and I caught the barrel of his gun with my left hand as it fell, and with the stick I held in my right dealt him such a blow with all my force on the head as stretched him senseless on the grass at my feet. I now had time to look about me. Close by, locked together in mortal combat, were the dreaded Big George and a figure whom I quickly recognised as young Ned Lockhart, Mrs. Halliday's favourite brother. Now Ned had only just left Oxford, and when I mention the fact that he for the last three years had rowed stroke in the 'Varsity boat, the reader may readily imagine to himself that he was what is commonly called a 'pretty stiff-built young fellow.' Good at all athletic sports, he was especially so with the gloves, and on the present occasion it was very evident that Big George had not only found his match, but considerably more than his match. As I came up they had closed, and thinking to bring matters to a speedy conclusion I was going to Ned's assistance, but he shouted to me to leave him alone.

'I'll finish him,' said he, with the utmost nonchalance; and as he spoke he freed his right arm, which up till now had been pinioned to his side by big George's bear-like hug, and struck the poacher, whose head was slightly turned on one side, and bent down, two heavy blows with all his force—blows terrible to see in their intensity. Their effect on the giant was instantaneous: his grasp relaxed; his gaunt frame grew suddenly limp; and in another second, as Ned let go of him, he fell literally all of a heap at his antagonist's feet.

'That's cooked *your* goose, my boy!' said Ned, coolly, as he surveyed the result of his handiwork with evident satisfaction. 'He's hurt my knuckles, though, with that cast-iron nob of his, confound him!' he added.

The battle was over. The fall of their leader was the signal for four of the poachers to make a bolt of it, and their figures could now be seen topping the fence out of the wood at the far end of the ride.

'Ah! the peelers in the road will have those chaps!' exclaimed Halliday, who, ornamented with a black eye, and with the stream of life flowing from his nose, now came up. 'Capital night's work hasn't it been, old fellow?'

And so it was. Every one of our division had accounted for his man, science having proved more than a match for brute force when it came to blows. With the exception of the four who had got away, every man of the gang was taken, all more or less severely mauled; though our side came off not altogether scathless, as sundry ugly marks on sundry manly countenances testified.

A shrill blast, as previously arranged, was now sounded from Halliday's dog-whistle, to bring up the reserve forces, and they shortly appeared, one by one—all but one of the watchers and our learned friend, Mr. Thomas Trimmer, Q.C. Another shrill blast on the whistle had the effect of bringing up the missing watcher.

'None of 'em cum your way did they, Bill?' asked the under-keeper, who, with Halliday, was kneeling by the side of the prostrate Wiggles, endeavouring to bring him to.

'Didn't they, then!' was the surly reply. 'Look at moy face, mate, that'll tell 'ee!'

And sure enough Bill's countenance on examination showed decided traces of having been in the wars; a heavy blow from a stick had evidently cut his cheek open.

'And where's the man who did it? Did he get away?' said Halliday, looking up.

'Git away! he'll niver git away!' was the confident reply. 'Why he's a-lyin' there like a log, and he be too heavy to carry, zur—he's a raal fat 'un, Squire—so I cum up when I heard you whistle, to get assistance. And,' wound up the valiant watcher, 'he be a thief, I reckon, as well as a poacher, for the wagabone's

got a great-coat on that arl swear niver belong to 'un, and a pair o' top boots on—same as you wears when you goes a hunting, Squire—as well, beggar me if he ain't! Haw! haw! haw!'

'Good Heavens!' ejaculated Halliday, starting up, 'this infernal idiot has killed Tommy Trimmer as sure as a gun! Where is he? you stupid fool! Show me the way at once! Come on, you fellows!'

And away we went at a run. Sure enough when, led by the now crestfallen Bill, we arrived at where he said he had left his late antagonist, we found, as we expected, the senseless form of the poor little Q.C. It turned out that William, turning suddenly into the ride from a scouting expedition on his own account, had been suddenly darted upon by some one, who, asking no questions, gave him one for himself with his stick. William, naturally taking him for an enemy, and smarting with rage, promptly returned the blow with interest; the knock being such a severe one that it rolled the valiant Tommy Trimmer, who of course was the assailant, over on the greensward like a rabbit.

'Well!' said the almost breathless Halliday, 'this is a pretty finale to our night's work, hang me if it isn't! What shall we do if he's killed? Give me the brandy-flask again, Ned. That's it; hold his head up whilst I pour some down his throat, Hurrah! he's coming to,' he suddenly shouted, as a faint movement of the eyelid denoted to the anxious lookers-on the pleasing fact that there was 'life in the old dog yet.' 'How do you feel, old man? Here, drink some more of this. Brandy-flask again, Ned—that's your sort! he'll be as right as a trivet directly.'

And Halliday was right; to the intense relief of all, our friend was only stunned; and ten minutes more, during which time he had managed to absorb the whole contents of the brandy-flask, saw the learned counsel on his legs again, and amid general rejoicing we forthwith proceeded to escort him home in triumph. The ladies, looking charming in dishabille, received us with open arms, and cries of 'How could you be so rash, Jack? How silly of you, Tom!' &c. &c. And the end of the night's frolic was (the ladies having once more taken their departure) a cheerful supper of devilled bones and champagne of which we all partook with very great gusto, followed

by a course of cigars and brandy and water, the fun winding up at five o'clock in the morning with a grand performance by the whole strength of the company, of that celebrated song, the Poacher,' the solo part in which was taken—as the musical reporters express it when describing an oratorio—by Mr. Thomas Trimmer, Q.C.

CAUGHT AT LAST.

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Vide *Opinions of the Press on next Page.*

Opinions of the Press on
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'We heartily commend the book. This bright and entertaining magazine is excellent enough to achieve a great success. The illustrations by Finch Mason and R. M. Alexander are most admirable. A most readable and truthful compilation of sporting events on "Fell and Field."'—*United Service Gazette.*

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'There is not a dull line between the two covers, and the illustrations by Mr. Finch Mason are quite beyond the sporting pictures which are usually to be found in pages meant for sportsmen. Indeed, we may say that few artists in black and white can compete with Mr. Mason in the delineation of the horse, and the spirit with which he contrives to invest his animals while in movement reminds us of the drawings of John Leech, whose humour he also seems to have caught.'—*Bell's Life.*

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MESSRS. FORES

Beg leave to announce the publication of a highly finished Etching by WALTER A. COX, entitled

'HIS FIRST AUDIENCE.'

From the Picture by A. HARVEY MOORE.

Size, 23½ by 14 inches.

Remarque Proof, £3 3*s*. Artist's Proof, £2 2*s*. India Prints, £1 11*s*. 6*d*. Prints, £1 1*s*. Coloured, £2 2*s*.

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

'AN etching of Mr. A. Harvey Moore's amusing picture, "His First Audience," has been published by Messrs. Fores, and is on view at their well-known gallery in Piccadilly. The *débutant* is no actor, but, with the leave of Apollo, a musician—a fisher-boy in huge sea-boots and fan-tailed hat, who, standing with his back against the stern of a boat that lies high and dry upon the beach, is playing on a tin whistle a tune "most musical, most melancholy." That it is so may be plainly inferred, not alone from his own sentimental expression, but also from that of his hearers, a trio of donkeys, who, grouped in front of him upon the glistening sands, listen with demure and pathetic interest, as who should say, "Is not this a most mournful ditty?" These sad impassive asses are the boy's first audience, and he may be proud of them, their well-bred attention contrasting favourably with the inconsiderate behaviour of certain selfish guests in drawing-rooms, who no sooner see a lady sit down at a piano than they begin to chatter. Here is no braying, no asinine gossiping, but such respectful silence as is to a true artist the most acceptable homage. The etching executed by Mr. Walter Cox is particularly good. With the softness and delicacy of his own process it combines something of the strength and brilliancy of a line engraving. Nicely balanced in light and shade, and remarkably clean in texture, it not only preserves the quiet, characteristic fun of the original, but also does full justice to the scenery. It is uniformly felicitous in the rendering of the seaside landscape with its sweep of undulating coast-line and its bright, crisp, ebbing tide; and it reproduces with singular fidelity the warm sunshiny tone of the picture.'—*Morning Post.*

'THE subject is a fisher-boy leaning against the stern of a boat, which is aground on the beach at low water, eliciting dulcet sounds from a tin flageolet. His audience consists of three donkeys, who, attracted by the music, are standing complacently in front of him. In the middle distance is a stretch of water, and behind it the rising ground of the coast. The entire work is very real; the countenance of the boy, whose mind is entirely absorbed in his performance, at which he is evidently a novice, is admirably given. The audience is equally well drawn. The texture of the coat on the nearest donkey is a masterpiece of line engraving. The print may be regarded as a most artistic rendering of a very successful painting of character.'—*Field.*

'"His First Audience," wherein the fisher-boy leaning on his boat is piping on his whistle content with the patronage of three stray donkeys, who, if wanting in intelligent connoisseurship, appear at least to be doing their best to extract pleasure from the performance. The engraving, which is mounted in the usual manner, is in size about 18 inches by 26.'—*Daily News.*

'THE engraver has reproduced in an admirable manner the artist's idea, so that the engraving is bound to be popular, for it is not often that we get originality so satisfactorily combined with good work.'—*Truth.*

LONDON: PUBLISHED BY MESSRS. FORES, 41 PICCADILLY, W.

MESSRS. FORES

Beg leave to announce the publication of a highly finished Etching by WALTER A. COX, entitled

'DOLCE CON ESPRESSIONE,'

From the Picture by J. WATSON NICOL.

Size, 17½ by 12½ inches.

Two Court Jesters in motley garb, with cap and bells, are beguiling the tedium of their ordinary vocations with a vocal and instrumental duet, and the soul-wrapt expressions of their faces is inimitably given as they are discoursing a passage 'dolce con espressione.'

This exquisite work is in the artist's happiest vein of humour, and will doubtless appeal to all lovers of music.

Remarque Proof, £5 5*s*. Artist's Proof, £3 3*s*. India Prints, £1 11*s*. 6*d*. Prints, £1 1*s*. Coloured, £3 3*s*.

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

'An engraver whose name is new to us, Mr. Walter Cox, has reproduced with much force and cleverness Mr. Watson Nicol's amusing picture, "Dolce con Espressione." Two mediæval and middle-aged minstrels are singing to their own accompaniment on the lute, and the painter has characterised them with a great deal of humour. The publishers of this plate are Messrs. Fores of Piccadilly.'—*The Times.*

'"Dolce con Espressione."—An etching has been made by Mr. Walter Cox after the original picture, bearing this title, from the hand of Mr. J. Watson Nicol. The subject, which is characteristically and humorously treated, is a couple of mediæval clowns engaged in a vocal duet, which they accompany with their lutes. Messrs. Fores, of Piccadilly, are the publishers.'—*Daily Telegraph.*

'Mr. Watson Nicol's interesting picture, "Dolce con Espressione," has been etched by Mr. Walter Cox, and published yesterday by Messrs. Fores of Piccadilly. The subject of the picture is a full-dress rehearsal (cap and bells), by two of the professional fools of long ago, of a new song. Their manuscript music is posed against an earthenware water-bottle, and the two vocalists are singing the concluding passage, "dolce con espressione," with a heavenly expression on their upturned faces, not altogether consistent with the profession "to which they had the honour to belong."'

Pall Mall Gazette.

'That gift of droll characterisation in which Mr. Watson Nicol signally excels is laughably manifest in his picture called "Dolce con Espressione"—a couple of waggish fellows, apparently Court buffoons of some long-vanished Italian dukedom, practising a duet together. There is comic intensity in their zeal, which is probably much in excess of their musical science. This amusing little work has been etched in skilful fashion by Mr. Walter A. Cox, a new "hand," of whose art we do not remember to have seen any previous example. Messrs. Fores, of Piccadilly, are the publishers.'—*Morning Post.*

'Messrs. Fores, of Piccadilly, have issued a clever etching by Walter Cox, after J. Watson Nicol. It represents a couple of jesters singing a duet, and their solemn countenances are in ludicrous contrast with their professional costume, one with upturned eyes, while he twangs his instrument, the other gravely scanning the notes on the sheet of music before him. It is a capital work.'—*Illustrated London News.*

London: Published by MESSRS. FORES, 41 Piccadilly. W.

Fores's New Sporting Publications.

'THE YOUNG MASTER.'

An upright Hunting Print, Coloured, from the Original Painting by A. C. HAVELL.

Size, with margin for framing, 30 by 22 inches. **Price £1 1s.**

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

'"THE YOUNG MASTER."—The latest addition to Messrs. Fores's splendid series of coloured sporting prints is taken from the original picture by A. C. Havell, entitled "The Young Master." It evidently represents the son of an M.F.H., apparently not more than ten or twelve years old, mounted on a stout brown horse, in the act of topping a stiff post-and-rail fence out of a meadow across which he has just galloped, attended by one of his father's grooms. The respectful distance at which the latter keeps his grey horse behind the brown, however, shows that he has confidence in his charge, and that "The Young Master" is no novice in the saddle. The boy is dressed in the regulation scarlet riding-coat, with leather continuations and top-boots; and the way he sits his horse, with his hands well down on the withers, shows an aptitude for the business which time and experience are sure to develop. His handsome, ruddy face, and clear blue eyes, indicate perfect health; and his long golden hair streams gaily behind him in the wind. The brown horse he rides is itself a study; the broad brisket and well-formed limbs are suggestive at once of power and stamina; while the foreshortening has been most artistically accomplished. The shading and gradation of tints on the skin, showing the development of the muscles, are wonderfully well rendered; while the animal's eyes, like those of his young master, are full of life, health, and animation. The perspective of the picture is remarkably good, the autumnal sky is as fine as if it had been washed in with the brush, and the tints of the bracken and brushwood are well contrasted. The picture on the whole is an admirable one, and quite as effective as any of the brilliant series that have preceded it.'—*Sporting Chronicle.*

'MESSRS. FORES'S GALLERY.—"The Young Master" is the title of a new and attractive publication with which Messrs. Fores of Piccadilly, whose long-established pre-eminence as publishers of such subjects remains still unchallenged, have recently enriched their celebrated series of sporting subjects. The youngster is a little fellow, hardly, as yet, in his teens. He is as much at his ease in the pig-skin as if he were lolling in an arm-chair. Both figures are well drawn, the foreshortening of the horse being particularly good. The landscape is bright and the day breezy. This picture is a brilliantly coloured print from a painting by Mr. A. C Havell.'—*Morning Post.*

LONDON: PUBLISHED BY MESSRS. FORES, 41 PICCADILLY, W.

FORES'S NEW SPORTING PUBLICATIONS.

A pair of highly-finished Engravings, from Paintings by F. CECIL BOULT and BASIL J. NIGHTINGALE, entitled

THE FIRST DAY OF THE SEASON, by F. Cecil Boult,

introduces us to a charming young lady on a well-bred chestnut, preceded by a gentleman, who is a type of the old English Sporting Squire, well mounted on a clipped bay, who is opening a gate into a lane, in which are seen entering a field on the opposite side, on their way to cover, the Huntsman, Whips, and Hounds.

Size, 30 by 14 inches.

Artist's Proofs, £5 5*s*. Prints, £1 1*s*. Coloured, £1 11*s*. 6*d*. And

THE END OF A LONG RUN, by Basil J. Nightingale,

Companion to above, presents us with the ultimate of the Noble Sport, 'The Death of the Fox,' who has just been rescued from the Pack with Brush, Pads, and Mask intact, the former doubtless intended for the Lady on the blown, thoroughbred-looking Hunter which forms the centre of the picture. The Huntsman's Bay and Hounds possess quality and character.

Size and prices the same as above.

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

'HUNTING SCENES.—A pair of subjects from the hunting-field, "The First Day of the Season," by Cecil Boult, and "The End of a Long Run," by Basil Nightingale, have been engraved by Mr. Henry Papprill, and are published by Messrs. Fores of Piccadilly. The spirit of the originals has been well caught, and the proof impressions, which have just been issued, show great care and finish.'—*Daily Telegraph.*

'MESSRS. FORES, Publishers, of 41 Piccadilly, have just published two very fine engravings, "The First Day of the Season," after Cecil Boult, and "The End of a Long Run," after Basil Nightingale. These engravings are of superior merit and will be welcome to all whose taste runs in the direction of sporting subjects which have been adequately handled, as they have been in this instance, and engraved with care.'—*Standard.*

'MESSRS. FORES, the well-known sporting publishers of Piccadilly, have just issued a pair of new hunting scenes, artists' proofs of which they have kindly forwarded to us. One of these is called "The First Day of the Season," after Cecil Boult, and represents a lady on horseback, attended by a groom, and preceded by an old sportsman, probably the master, who is in the act of opening a gate for her. On the other side of the fence the hounds are seen proceeding to draw a covert to the right, accompanied by the whips, while a portion of the field is seen in the middle distance. The trees on the left are well drawn, and the whole subject has been finely handled. The companion picture, "The End of a Long Run," after Basil Nightingale, is a very spirited composition. The whip has just taken the defunct Reynard from the hounds, who are eagerly waiting for the share of the prize which will be theirs when the honours of the chase have been secured for the lady who is in at the death. The lady's horse is thoroughly blown, her bespattered dress shows the heavy nature of the ground she has traversed, while the fact that only one other mounted figure is in sight shows that the run has been a hard as well as a long one. The perspective in both pictures is particularly good, and the pictures themselves, when suitably framed, will form handsome additions to the sportsman's art treasures.'—*Sporting Chronicle.*

'THE engravings have been carefully executed by Papprill. The subjects represented are full of life, and being faithful realities will forcibly appeal to all lovers of sport.'—*County Gentleman.*

MESSRS. FORES'S GALLERY.—Two engravings just published by Messrs. Fores illustrate hunting subjects of equal interest though dissimilar character. The one is entitled "The First Day of the Season," the other "The End of a Long Run." In the former, which is after a picture by Mr. Cecil Boult, the day's work has yet to be done. Men, horses, hounds, all fresh and all eager for the fray, are on their way to the covert-side. There is a large "field," but only one lady among them. Mounted on a strong hunter in the immediate foreground, and awaiting somewhat impatiently the leisurely opening of a gate by an elderly gentleman who has seen too much of life to be in a hurry about anything, she has the look and seat of a true sportswoman. She will ride as straight across country as any of the other sex—perhaps straighter than most of them. In the second print, after a painting by Mr. Basil Nightingale, the run is over, and a long and eventful run it has been. A lady and the whipper-in alone are in at the death. The ravenous hounds are giving tongue clamorously for their prey. Both engravings are on view, with many other sporting pieces, at the Publishers' well-known gallery in Piccadilly.'—*Morning Post.*

FORES'S NEW SPORTING PUBLICATIONS.

A pair of upright Hunting Prints, highly coloured, from Paintings by F. CECIL BOULT, entitled

GONE AWAY!

AND

RUN TO EARTH!

Size, with margin for framing, 31 *by* 19 *inches.*

Price £2 2s. the pair.

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

'From Messrs. Fores and Co., 41 Piccadilly, we have received two companion coloured prints, "Gone Away" and "Run to Earth." The artist is Mr. F. Cecil Boult, some of whose hunting pictures have already been noticed in these columns. Dealing first of all with "Gone Away," we are glad to find that the artist has broken the traditional method of representing the pack in a wedge-like form, with the nose of the leading hound on the ground, that of the second in the air, and so on. In Mr. Boult's picture there are only two and a half couple of hounds in the foreground, and they are not in conventional attitudes. The huntsman's horse is coming nearly straight on end at the spectator—a position that renders the representation of animals additionally difficult. At the finish of the run, the master is up at the drain before the huntsman, notwithstanding an evident fall, and is the prominent character in the plate. These pictures are well coloured, and will form an acceptable addition to the hunting-man's picture-gallery, should he have any wall space to spare.'—*The Field.*

'"Gone Away" and "Run to Earth" are from original pictures by Mr. F. Cecil Boult, who has handled his subjects in a masterly manner, indicative of thorough acquaintance with, and close observation of, hunting in the shires. The landscapes are fresh and breezy, the figures boldly drawn, the men sit their horses as if they knew how to handle them, and were not in the habit of wasting time in looking for gaps or gates. The horses and hounds have been drawn with a firm hand; the former are fine specimens of the high-class hunter, while there is a great deal of the right sort of character about the hounds. Both subjects are excellent in composition, and they have been treated with a pleasing absence of conventionality which will render them doubly acceptable to all sportsmen.'—*Sporting Chronicle.*

'The artist has succeeded in vigorously portraying an exciting scene in the hunting-field, and especially is he entitled to praise for his spirited drawing of the horses and hounds. The foreshortening of the foremost horse in "Gone Away" is a masterpiece of technical skill, and the massing of the hounds in the second picture is also well done. Messrs. Fores are to be commended for their enterprise in this popular line of art.'—*Bell's Life.*

'There is one other matter to which I should like to call attention It is the production by Messrs. Fores, of Piccadilly, of some beautiful hunting-plates, from the original pictures in their possession. There should be a strong demand for these in country circles as well as in sporting London. Therefore, I say, "Hark forward" to Fores's, and have a look at them.'—*Sporting Life.*

'Messrs. Fores, of 41 Piccadilly, have issued some good coloured sporting prints illustrative of foxhunting scenes. There is a go and vividness about these that should commend them to all those misguided beings who peril their necks tracking vermin while we more sapiently sit in our study with the *Calendar*, laboriously spotting losers.'—*Sporting Times.*

'These prints have been unconventionally treated, both in composition and shape, and the style and character of the horses, hounds, and men, are such as will commend themselves to hunting-men.'—*Land and Water.*

'The drawings of the horses and hounds are full of life in the exciting scenes which are portrayed, and will in their reality commend themselves to all lovers of the Chase.'—*County Gentleman.*

London: Published by Messrs. Fores, 41 Piccadilly, W.

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RACING.

7. Saddling. 8. A False Start. 9. The Run In. 10. Returning to Weigh. Price £10 10*s*. the four, or the Set of Ten Plates, price £26 5*s*.

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THE SPORTING CANTAB. By Cuthbert Bradley. The Central Figure represents a modern university sportsman puffing a cigarette in front of his fireplace. Over the mantlepiece are depicted the insignia of learning and sport; the latter, as may be supposed, predominating; while at his feet are three fox-terriers. Surrounding him are the following sketches of incidents connected with his 'Varsity' life—'Down at Ditton in the May Week,' 'Coaching for his "Little Go,"' 'Dons Silk at Cottenham,' 'A Run with the Trinity Beagles,' 'Driving Tandem,' 'Hunted by the Proctor,' 'Playing Polo for the 'Varsity,' 'A Peep at Newmarket,' and 'Hunting with the Fizwilliam.'

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THE SPORTSMAN'S DREAM, by R. M. Alexander, represents a tired and sleeping Sportsman reclining in his easy-chair before a comfortable fire, dreaming of the following Sports, which are cleverly depicted in the wreaths arising from his half-smoked pipe; viz., Hunting, Yachting, Coaching, Pigeon-Shooting, Billiards, Golf, Deer-Stalking Grouse-Shooting, Steeple-Chasing, Salmon-Fishing, Boxing, Racing, Polo, and Cards.

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SALMON-FISHING, by W. Brackett, in four subjects, entitled 'The Rise,' 'The Leap,' 'The Struggle,' 'Landed,' are clearly the work of a Salmon Fisher, and being replete with artistic finish will surely commend themselves to lovers of the sport.

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THE NIGHT TEAM, by C. Cooper Henderson, forms Plate 6 of the celebrated Series of Fores's Coaching Recollections, and shows the night 'Screws' being 'put to,' the duck-toed Coachman looking to the harness, whilst the Guard affixes the lamps. This is replete with 'character,' and one of the best of the Series.

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4. Killed in the Open.

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HIS FIRST AUDIENCE, by A. Harvey Moore. Engraved by WALTER A. COX. Fisher Lad, leaning against the stern of a boat, intently playing on a pipe; three donkeys standing near, appearing absorbed by the musical strains.

Size of Work, 23¼ by 14 inches.
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2. THROWING THEM IN.
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Coloured, 15¼ by 11 inches, £4 4*s.* the pair.

'LOST AND FOUND,' by Stanley Berkley.

'Weary, and worn, and sad,
By the lamp's cold gleam I stand,
Waiting and watching, sighing and sighing,
For that loved and long-lost hand.

A large Dog which has been stolen, having broken the rope which held him (a part being still round his neck), regains the door of his old home, and waits eagerly and anxiously on the doorstep in pelting rain for 'that loved and long-lost hand.' Coloured, 10½ by 8½ inches, £1 5*s.* Plain, 10*s.* 6*d.*

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Coloured Print, 20 by 14½ inches, 15*s.*

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